

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

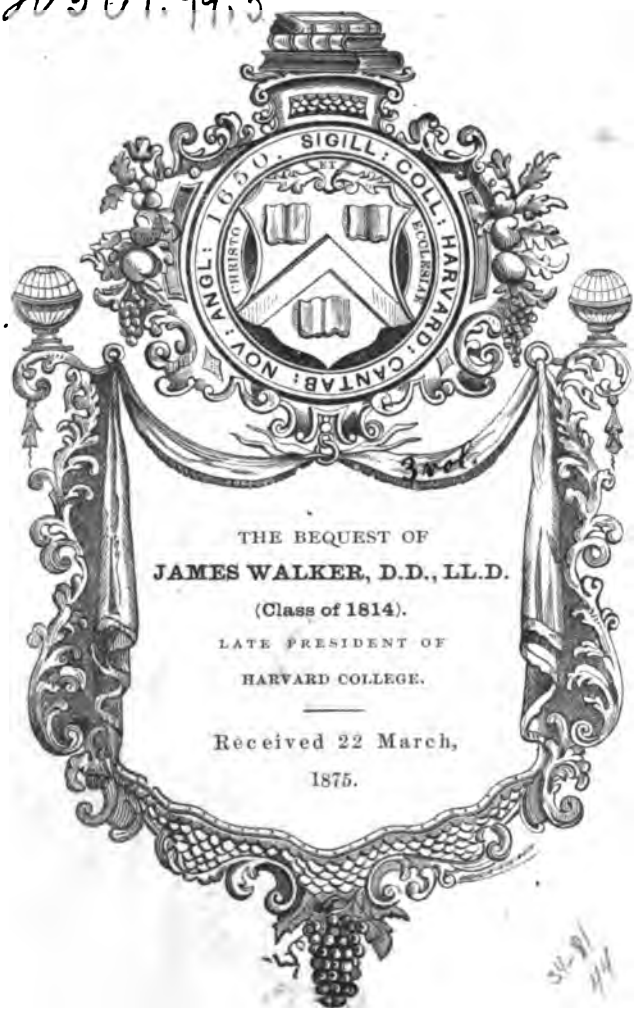
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Bx 307.99.5



3 vol.

THE BEQUEST OF
JAMES WALKER, D.D., LL.D.
(Class of 1814).
LATE PRESIDENT OF
HARVARD COLLEGE.

Received 22 March,
1875.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

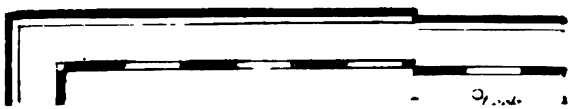
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

ANGLO-SAXONS

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE

NORMAN CONQUEST.

By SHARON TURNER, F.A.S. & R.A.S.L.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



Digitized by Google

~~2453,2~~
Rv 307.99.5
1875, March 22.
Walker Bequest.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

TO

THE SIXTH EDITION.

THE increasing prosperity of the British nation, and the expansion of its empire by the new colonies which are issuing from it, and are forming, as they settle and enlarge, new branches of dominion to it in the distant regions of our globe, make its first rudiments and humble beginnings more interesting to us. To represent these faithfully, and to collect from the perishing or neglected memorials of former times every circumstance that could exhibit them, before it became impossible to do so from the disappearance of the ancient documents, and from the overwhelming flood of modern events, revolutions, and diversified knowlege, which have made the last fifty years so memorable, was the favourite object of the author, when in his youthful days he conceived the idea and attempted to execute it in the following work.

THAT he should have lived to revise its sixth edition was more than he expected: for it is now thirty-seven years since he published its first volume. This is pleasing; but it is still a greater

Digitized by Google

gratification to observe, that so much of the attention of the public continues to be directed to the transactions, remains, and language of their Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and that so many able men still apply themselves to illustrate this truly national subject by various and valuable publications. It was one of his earnest wishes that men of talent and industry should be induced to do so, that what he could not but leave imperfect on several points, might be completed by subsequent research. This has been creditable to themselves, and just to our forefathers; and will now rescue our most important antiquities from future oblivion.

The Anglo-Saxons were deficient in the surprising improvements which their present descendants have attained; but unless they had acquired and exercised the valuable qualities, both moral and intellectual, which they progressively advanced to before their dynasty ceased, England would not have become that distinguished nation which, after the Norman graft on its original Saxon stock, it has since been gradually led to be.

Cottage, Winchmore Hill,
July 4. 1836.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

THE first edition of this work was published, in successive parts, between the years 1799 and 1805. When the first volume appeared, the subject of the Anglo-Saxon antiquities had been nearly forgotten by the British public; although a large part of what we most love and venerate in our customs, laws, and institutions, originated among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. A few scholars in a former century had cultivated the study, and left grammars, dictionaries, and catalogues for our use; but their labours had been little heeded, and no one had added to the information which they had communicated. The Anglo-Saxon MSS. lay still unexamined, and neither their contents nor the important facts which the ancient writers and records of other nations had preserved of the transactions and fortunes of our ancestors had been ever made a part of our general history. The Quida, or death-song, of Ragnar Lodbrog first led the present author to perceive the deficiency, and excited his wish to supply it. A series of careful researches into every original document that he had

Digitized by Google

the opportunity of examining was immediately begun, and steadily pursued, till all that was most worth preserving was collected from the Anglo-Saxon MSS. and other ancient books. The valuable information thus obtained the author endeavoured to give to the public, in a readable form in this work, of which two-thirds have not appeared in English history before. His favourite desire has been fulfilled — a taste for the history and remains of our Great Ancestors has revived, and is visibly increasing.

MANY writers have since followed in the same path. Their publications have spread the useful taste, and contributed to obtain for our venerable forefathers the attention of their enlightened posterity. To gratify more fully this patriotic curiosity, some additional portions of original matter, from the Anglo-Saxon remains, have been inserted in the present edition. The most important of these consist of the following additions:

ON reading our Alfred's Anglo-Saxon translation of Boetius, the author observed passages which were not in the original. Struck with this curious fact, he compared the king's work carefully with the Latin of Boetius, and found that Alfred had frequently taken occasion to insert his own thoughts and reasonings in various parts, forming so many little essays, dialogues, and imitated tales, of our venerable sovereign's own composition. Some of the most important of these have been selected and translated, and inserted in the second volume of the present edition.

SINCE the author called the attention of the public, in 1805, to the neglected, and indeed unknown Saxon heroic poem on Beowulf, Dr.

Digitized by Google

Thorkelin has printed it at Copenhagen in 1815. This valuable publication has assisted the author in giving a fuller analysis of this curious composition in the third volume.

On the composition of the Anglo-Saxon parliament, or witena-gemot, many have desired more satisfactory information than the author had incorporated in the preceding editions. He has inserted, in the present, all the facts that he found, which seemed to have an actual relation to this interesting subject, and has added such remarks as they have suggested to a mind, wishing to be correct and impartial.

The author has added a statement of the great principles of the Anglo-Saxon Constitution and laws, as far as an attentive consideration of our most ancient documents has enabled him to discriminate them.

He has been long since requested to give some detail of the Anglo-Saxon population. The Conqueror's Record of Domesday afforded good materials for this subject. It has been examined, with this object in view; and the reader will find, in the third volume, an enumeration of the different classes and numbers of people whom it records to have been living in England about the time of the Norman conquest.

Some pains have been taken to make the work, in its other parts, as improved and as complete as a careful diligence could secure, and at the same time to comprise the whole within the compass of three octavo volumes. This object has been attained without the sacrifice of any material information, although, to accomplish it, some parts have been necessarily printed in a smaller type, and

Digitized by Google

other as appendices. But the convenience to the public of compressing this history into three volumes seemed to outbalance the disadvantage of a partial alteration of the printed letter. As it now stands, it presents the reader with the History of England from the earliest known period to the time of the Norman conquest.

It would have been desirable, for the gratification of the curious student, that the original Anglo-Saxon of the various passages that are cited and given in English should have been added; but this would have extended the work into a fourth volume, and have made it more expensive than the author desired. The public may rely on his assurance, that he has endeavoured to make the translations literally faithful, in order that the style, as well as the sense, of the Anglo-Saxon writer may be perceived.

London, *March*, 1820.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

TO

THE FIFTH EDITION.

In this edition the general catalogue of the affinities of the Anglo-Saxon language has been enlarged; and lists are added of those which the author has observed between many of its words and the corresponding terms in the Arabic, the Hebrew, the Chinese, the Sanscrit, the Georgian, the Malay, the Mantchou, the Japanese, the Caribbee, the Turkish, the Susoo, the Angola, the Tonga, and the Lapland tongues. The analogies he traced with the Persian, Zend, and Pehlvi are not inserted with the above in these volumes, because they were sent to the Royal Society of Literature, and may be printed in the next publication of its Transactions.

The Vindication of the antient Welsh Bards, and the Essay on the Antiquity of Rime, were printed with the fourth edition of this work, and are also added to the present, because they are both connected with that portion of the British History which this work comprises.

32. *Red Lion Square,*
October 1. 1827.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO

THE FIRST VOLUME.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

The early Division of Mankind into the civilised and Nomadic Nations. — The most ancient Population of BRITAIN *proceeded from the Nomadic.*

	Page
POPULATION of Europe disputed - -	1
The Keltic distinguished from the Gothic tribes -	2
Dr. Percy's table of their different languages -	3
Three great streams of population in Europe - -	4
All population the result of emigration from one race -	5
Its slow progress, and from the East - -	6
Mankind always in two great classes - -	8
General description of the civilised class - -	12
——————— Nomadic, or Barbaric class -	15
The first civilised nations - - -	22
Our ancestors from the Nomadic class - -	23

CHAP. II.

That the KIMMERIAN *and* KELTIC *Nations were the earliest Inhabitants of the West of Europe. — A brief Outline of their Migrations and Expeditions. — Settlement of their Colonies in* BRITAIN.—WELSH *Traditions on this Subject.*

Digitized by Google

	Page
Three genera of languages in Europe	25
The Kimmerian, or Keltic	ib.
The Gothic, Scythian, or Teutonic	ib.
The Sarmatian, or Slavonic	26
Kimmerians the earliest inhabitants of Europe	27
Their movements when attacked by the Scythians	ib.
Their progress to the German Ocean	30
The Cimbri were Kimmerians	31
Kimmerians and Cymry in Britain	34
Hw Cadarn	35
Manners of the Kimmerians and Cimbri	37
The Kelts sprang from the Kimmerians	40
The Kelts in the west of Europe — Their movements	42
The Kelts enter Britain	47

CHAP. III.

PHENICIANS *and* CARTHAGINIANS *in* BRITAIN.

Phenicians in Spain and Britain	51
The Cassiterides	ib.
These islands, the Scilly Isles, and Cornwall	52
Welsh traditions	55
Carthaginians acquainted with Britain	56

CHAP. IV.

On the Knowledge which the GREEKS *had of the* BRITISH *Islands; and on the Tradition of the* TROJAN *Colony.*

The Grecian knowledge of Europe gradual	58
Britain known to the Greeks	59
Voyage of Pytheas	60
Traditions of Grecian intercourse	62
Story of Brutus and his Trojans	63

CHAP. V.

The Manners of the ancient BRITONS. — *The Druids.*

Forty-five tribes in Britain	66
State of the country	68

Digitized by Google

	Page
Persons and Dress of the Britons	69
Their houses and customs	70
Their war-chariots	71
Their religion	72
Their Druids	74

CHAP. VI.

Invasion of BRITAIN *by* JULIUS CÆSAR. — *Its final Conquest by the* ROMANS.

	Page
Cæsar's great projects	77
His first expedition to Britain	78
His second	79
Successes of the emperor Claudius	82
Vespasian and Titus in Britain	ib.
Boadicea's struggle for independence	84
Agricola's conquest and improvements	ib.
The walls built by the Romans	87

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The Origin of the SAXONS.

A. C.		
141.	Saxons first mentioned by Ptolemy	89
	——— not noticed by Tacitus	91
	Other tribes omitted by Tacitus	ib.
	The Scythian, or Gothic, population of Europe	93
	The Anglo-Saxons a branch of this	94
	Existing works in the ancient languages from the Gothic stock	95
	Scythians in Asia	96
6—700.	Scythians enter Europe	98
	The Sakai-suna probably the Saxons	100
	Their country now the province of Karabaugh	ib.
	Ancient Scythian language	102
	And deities	ib.
	The Sclavonians, or Sarmatic branch	104
	Their chronological succession	105
	Antiquarian theories on the origin of the Saxons	107

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

Description of the Country inhabited by the SAXONS *near the* ELBE, *before they occupied* BRITAIN.

A. C.		Page
	The three Saxon islands - -	111
	Northstrandt - - -	ib.
	Busen - - - -	112
	Heilig-island, the most celebrated - -	113
	Continental territory of the Saxons -	117
	Ditmarsia - - - -	118
	Stormaria - - -	119
	Holsatia - - - -	ib.

CHAP. III.

Circumstances favourable to the increase of the SAXON *Power on the Continent.*

	Progress of the Romans to the Elbe -	121
	Cæsar's invasion of Germany - -	122
	Augustus subdues its districts to the Rhine -	124
	His operations towards the Danube -	125
	Progress of Drusus to the Elbe - -	126
	Patriotic exertions of Arminius - -	127
	Sanguinary victories of Germanicus -	129
	His recall - - -	132
17.	Repulse of the Romans to the Rhine -	133
	Growth of the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe - - - -	134
235—240.	Maximin's invasion of Germany -	136
	Origin of the Francs - - -	138
	Their use to the Saxons - -	ib.

CHAP. IV.

The Application of the SAXONS *to Maritime Expeditions.*

Naval exertions of the nations between the Rhine and Elbe - - - -	140
Voyage of Francs from the Euxine -	142
Its effects on the Saxons - -	143

Digitized by Google

A. C.		Page
	Usurpation of Carausius - - -	144
287.	He teaches the Saxons the naval art -	145
	Magnentius allies with them - -	146

CHAP. V.

The League of the SAXONS *with other States; and their Continental Aggrandizement.*

	Their league with the nations between the Rhine and Elbe - - -	147
	The Jutes - - - -	150
	The Angles - - -	ib.

CHAP. VI.

Sequel of their History to the Period of the ANGLO-SAXON *invasion.*

368.	The Saxons attack Britain - -	152
	Are defeated by Theodosius -	ib.
370.	Defeated by the Romans on the Continent	153
	Their diffusion on the Continent -	154
	Their colonies in Hungary and Transilvania	155

CHAP. VII.

The History of BRITAIN *elucidated, from the Death of* MAXIMUS, *in* 388, *to the final Departure of the* ROMANS.

	Bede's chronology of this period erroneous -	158
383.—388.	Rise and fall of Maximus - -	159
	Rise and actions of Alaric - -	163
	Progress of the Goths - - -	164
	Progress of Alaric - - -	166
	Gildas compared with the imperial writers -	167
	Movements of the legions in Britain -	172
	Germans excited by Stilicho to invade Gaul -	174
406.	Revolt of the troops in Britain: Constantine chosen their emperor - - -	176
	He leaves Britain - - -	ib.

Digitized by Google

A. C.		Page
	His officer, Gerontius, confounded by Jeffrey with Vortigern	177
409.	The Barbaric nations attack Britain	178
	Britons assert their independence	179
	Merobaudes on the Consulship of Ætius	181

CHAP. VIII.

The History of BRITAIN *between the Departure of the* ROMANS *and the Invasion of the* SAXONS.

410.	British independence continues	182
	Discontented state of the Roman provinces	185
	They favour the Gothic invaders	186
	The Bagaudæ	187
	The Civitates of Britain	189
	Civil discord in the island	192
	Many kings in Britain	194
	Roman improvements in the country	195
	Gildas's picture of their moral state	198

APPENDIX TO BOOK II.

THE MANNERS OF THE SAXONS IN THEIR PAGAN STATE.

CHAP. I.

Character and persons of the most ancient Saxons 202

CHAP. II.

Their government and laws 208

CHAP. III.

Religion of the Saxons in their Pagan state	213
Their idols	217
Their rites	222
Their Irminsula	ib.
Principles of their ancient paganism	227
Their traditions on the end of the world	228

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

On the Menology and Literature of the Pagan SAXONS.

A. C.		Page
	The Saxon months - - -	233
	On their alphabetical characters - -	234
	The Voluspa translated - - -	240

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

The Arrival of HENGIST. — *His Transactions and Wars with the* BRITONS, *and final Settlement in* KENT.

	Gwrtheryn or Vortigern - - -	252
449.	Arrival of Hengist - - - -	253
	Saxons make peace with the Picts - -	260
	Hengist's battles with Guortimer - -	261
	His conquest of Kent - - -	264

CHAP. II.

ELLA *arrives in* SUSSEX, *and founds a Kingdom there.* — CERDIC *invades the South Part of the Island, and establishes the Kingdom of* WESSEX. — *Battles of his Successors with the* BRITONS.

477.	Arrival of Ella - - -	267
495.	Invasion of Cerdic - - -	269
	Establishes himself in Wessex - -	270
534.	His son Cynric - - - -	271
560.	Ceawlin's great successes - - -	273
	Genealogies of the Anglo-Saxon kings - -	275

CHAP. III.

Ancient BRITISH *Accounts of the Battles with the* WEST SAXONS: *and the authentic History of* ARTHUR.

530.	Battle of Llongborth - - -	281
	—— on the Llawen - - -	282
	—— of Bath - - - -	ib.

Digitized by Google

A. C.		Page
	Probable history of ARTHUR - -	283
	His birth - - - -	284
	His actions - - - -	285
	How mentioned in the Welsh bards - -	288
542.	His death - - - -	290
	His death concealed - - -	291
	His family - - - -	292
1189.	His remains discovered - - -	ib.
	And enshrined - - - -	294

CHAP. IV.

Establishment of the ANGLO-SAXONS *in* EAST ANGLIA, MERCIA, *and* ESSEX. — *Arrival of* IDA *in* NORTHUMBERLAND. — *Battles with the* BRITONS. — *Kingdoms of* BERNICIA *and* DEIRA.

527.	First arrivals in East Anglia - -	296
530.	Kingdom of ESSEX founded - -	ib.
547.	Ida arrives in Bernicia - - -	297
	State of the north of Britain -	298
	Urien of Reged - - - -	300
	Battle of Argoed Llyfain - - -	301
	——— Gwenystrad - - -	ib.
	Llywarch Hen's elegy on Urien - -	303
	Owen, the son of Urien - - -	304
	Battle of Cattraeth - - -	306
	The Gododin of Aneurin - - -	ib.
	Slow progress of the Angles - -	314
559.	Ida's death - - - -	ib.
	Frisians in England - - -	316
	Strandfrisii - - - -	317
	Settlements of the Jutes and Anglo-Saxons -	318

CHAP. V.

History of the ANGLO-SAXON *Octarchy, and its further Successes against the* BRITONS *to the beginning of the Seventh Century.*

560.	An octarchy established - -	320
	Restoration of the Britons predicted by their bards - - - -	322

Digitized by Google

A. C.		Page
560.	Anglo-Saxons war with each other - -	326
568.	Ethelbert invades Ceawlin - - -	ib.
591.	Ceawlin's death - - - -	327
603.	Successes of Ethelfrith - - -	329
607.	Bangor destroyed - - -	330
610.	Tewdric defeats Ceolwulph - -	331
	Distress of the Welsh - - -	332
614.	Cynegil's victory over the Britons - -	333

CHAP. VI.

The Introduction of CHRISTIANITY *among the* ANGLO-SAXONS *in* KENT *and* ESSEX.—ETHELBERT's *Reign in* KENT.

	Pope Gregory's desire to convert the Anglo-Saxons - - - -	334
596.	He sends Augustin on the mission - -	337
597.	Augustin addresses Ethelbert - -	339
	The king becomes a Christian - -	341
604.	Christianity introduced into Essex - -	342

CHAP. VII.

Expedition of the EAST ANGLIANS *to the* RHINE.—EDWIN's *Asylum in* EAST ANGLIA.—REDWALD's *defeat of* ETHELFRITH.—EDWIN's *Reign in* NORTHUMBRIA; *and the Introduction of* CHRISTIANITY *into that Province.*

534—547.	East Anglians land on the Rhine -	345
617.	Ethelfrith expels Edwin from Northumbria -	346
	Redwald of East Anglia protects Edwin -	347
	——— defeats Ethelfrith - - -	348
	Ethelfrith's death - - -	349
	Edwin's reign in Northumbria - -	ib.
625.	His meditations on Christianity - -	352
	Discussions on it in his witena-gemot -	354
628.	Edwin and his nobility baptized - -	358
	His conduct to Cadwallon - - -	360
633.	Edwin's death - - -	361
	Cadwallon's victories - - -	362
	——— defeat and death - -	363

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

The Reign, Actions, and Death of PENDA.—*History of the* ANGLO-SAXON *Octarchy to the Accession of* ALFRED *of* NORTHUMBRIA.

A. C.		Page
627—684.	Rise of Penda	365
634.	Oswald's reign in Northumbria, and death	366
643.	Penda attacks Wessex and East Anglia	368
654.	Oswy	370
	Oswin killed	ib.
655.	Penda's fall	371
	Peada introduces Christianity into Mercia	372
	His assassination	374
659.	Cenwalch in Wessex	375
	Sigeberht restores Christianity in Essex	376
670.	Oswy's death	378
672.	Saxburga	ib.
674.	Æscuin — Kentwin	379
	Ecgfrid in Northumbria	380
684.	——— Invades Ireland	382
	——— slain against the Picts	383

CHAP. IX.

Reign of ALFRED *of* NORTHUMBRIA *and his Successors.—History of* WESSEX *to the Death of* INA.

684—728.	Alfred the Wise in Northumbria	385
	Encourages literature	387
	Ceadwalla in Wessex	390
	Mollo's catastrophe	391
	Ceadwalla's death	392
688.	Ina's accession and reign	ib.
721.	He abdicates and goes to Rome	398
731.	Anglo-Saxon kings at this period	399

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

The History of the Octarchy from the Death of INA *to the Accession of* EGBERT *in the Year* 800.

A. C.		Page
728.	Ethelheard in Wessex	401
	Ethelbald in Mercia	402
743.	Defeats the Welsh	403
752.	His war with Cuthred	ib.
755.	And death	405
	Revolutions of Northumbria	406
774.	Offa reigns in Mercia	410
777.	His correspondence with Charlemagne	412
784.	Cynewulf of Wessex assassinated	416
787.	Vices of queen Eadburga	417
	Her miserable end	418

CHAP. XI.

The Reigns of EGBERT *and* ETHELWULF.

800.	Egbert accedes	419
819.	Rivalry of Wessex and Mercia	422
823.	Egbert subdues Kent and Wessex	424
	Conquers Mercia	426
827.	Invades Northumbria	427
832.	Attacked by the Danes	ib.
836.	His death	428
	Doubts as to his being crowned king of England	429
	Dates and successions of the different kings of the octarchy	430

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

The Political State of NORWAY, SWEDEN, *and* DENMARK, *in the Eighth Century.*

	State of Norway	433
	Of Sweden	436
	Of Denmark	439

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

The SEA-KINGS *and Vikingr of the North.*

A. C.		Page
	The sea-kings	444
	Northern piracy	447
	The vikingr	448
	The berserkir	450

CHAP. III.

Comparison between the Histories of SAXO-GRAMMATICUS *and* SNORRE.— *The first Aggression of the* NORTHMEN *on the* ANGLO-SAXONS.— *The Rise, Actions, and Death of* RAGNAR LODBROG.

	Saxo Grammaticus	454
	The Icelandic writers	457
	Snorre's history	458
	On the unprovided population of the North	461
	Ragnar Lodbrog's actions	464
	His Quida, or death-song	475

CHAP. IV.

The Reign of ETHELWULPH. — *Invasion of the* NORTHMEN. —*Birth of* ALFRED *the Great.*— *His Travels.*— ETHELWULPH'*s Deposition.*

836—856.	Ethelwulph's reign	480
849.	Birth of Alfred the Great	483
	Northmen's invasions	ib.
853.	Alfred sent to Rome	487
	Ethelwulph's charter on the tithes	488
	His presents to the pope	490
856.	His marriage with Judith the French princess	491
	His deposition	492

CHAP. V.

The Reigns of ETHELBALD *and* ETHELBERT.— ALFRED'*s Education.*

856.	Ethelbald's accession	494
	Judith's third marriage	495

Digitized by Google

A. C.		Page
860.	Ethelbert succeeds - - -	495
	His death - - - -	496
866.	Ethelred's accession - - - -	ib.
	Alfred's youth and education. - -	497

CHAP. VI.

The Accession of ETHELRED, *the third Son of* ETHELWULPH. — *The Arrival of the Sons of* RAGNAR LODBROG *in* ENGLAND. — *Their Revenge on* ELLA. — *Conquests and Depredations.* — ETHELRED's *Death.*

866.	Arrival of the Northern Confederacy -	506
	The Northmen defeat Ella at York - -	508
867.	Alfred's marriage - - - -	511
868.	The Northmen advance to Croyland -	514
870.	Invade East Anglia - - -	521
	Death of Edmund - - - -	525
	Wessex attacked - - -	526
	Ethelred dies - - - -	529

CHAP. VII.

The Reign of ALFRED *from his Accession to his Retirement.*

871.	Alfred accedes - - - -	530
	His defeat and first peace - - -	533
874.	Northmen conquer Mercia - - -	ib.
	And Bernicia - - - - -	535
876.	They attack Alfred—his second peace -	ib.
877.	Alfred's naval successes - - -	536

CHAP. VIII.

ALFRED *becomes a Fugitive.— Misconduct imputed to him.*

878.	Northmen enter Wilts - - -	539
	Alfred's flight - - -	ib.
	Its cause investigated - - -	542
	Misconduct imputed to him - - -	544
	The probable cause - - -	548
	Alfred deserted by his subjects - -	550

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

His Conduct during his Seclusion.

A. C.		Page
	His retreat in the cottage described - -	553
	His munificence to the peasant - -	558
	Ubbo's attack in Devonshire - - -	559
	Exertions of Alfred before he discovered himself to his people - - -	561
	His charity - - - -	564

CHAP. X.

The Battle which produced ALFRED's *Restoration.*

	He visits the Danish camp - - -	565
	Battle at Ethandune - - - -	568
	Its success - - - -	569

CHAP. XI.

Review of the Causes and Consequences of the NORTHMAN *Invasion.—The Actions of* HASTINGS, *and his Invasion of* ENGLAND. — ALFRED's *Death.*

	Alfred's Treaty with Godrun - -	573
879.	Another attempt of the Northmen - -	575
884.	Another - - - - -	576
	Actions of Hastings the Danish vikingr -	577
893.	His Invasion of England - - -	580
	Alfred's operations against him - -	583
897.	Alfred improves his ships - - -	596
	Hastings finally expelled - - -	597
900.	Alfred's death and burial - -	599

Digitized by Google

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

The early Division of Mankind into the Civilized and Nomadic Nations.— The most ancient Population of Britain proceeded from the Nomadic.

CHAP. I.

No subject has been more disputed by antiquarian writers than the origin of the population of Europe; and no discussions have been more fanciful, more ill-tempered, or more contradictory. As vehement and pertinacious have been the controversies on the peopling of Great Britain. Few topics would seem to be more remote from the usual currents of human passions, than the inquiry from what nations our primeval ancestors descended: and yet the works of our historical polemics, on investigations so little connected with any present interest or feeling, have abounded with all the abusive anger which irritability could furnish; as well as with all the dogmatism, confusion, dreams, and contradictions, that egotism could generate, or wranglers and adversaries pursue.

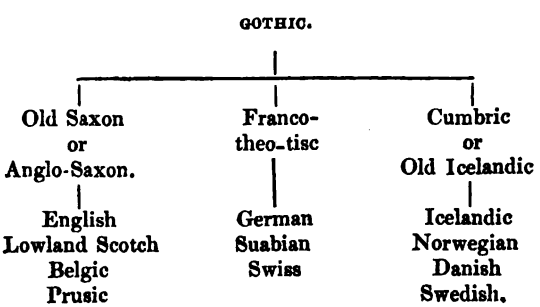
Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

It is not intended in this work to renew disputations so interminable and so useless. But in order to present the reader with a complete view of the History of England, from the earliest period to the Norman Conquest, when the Anglo-Saxon dynasty ceased, the first division of this history will be devoted to collect, from an impartial consideration of the original and ancient writers, that series of facts and those reasoned inferences, which most deserve the attention and belief of an enlightened age. The authentic will be distinguished from the conjectural; and the nearest approach to unbiassed judgment and to historical truth, that can be effected on periods which are now so obscure, because so remote, will be dispassionately attempted.

After a succession of disputes, which had increased the labyrinths of controversial investigation, and made the doubtful more uncertain, Dr. Percy, in 1770, struck out a clear and certain path, by distinguishing the Keltic from the Gothic tribes; and by arranging the principal languages of Europe, under these two distinct genera, with specimens of the Lord's prayer in each.[1]

[1] Dr. Percy's genealogical table was thus composed:



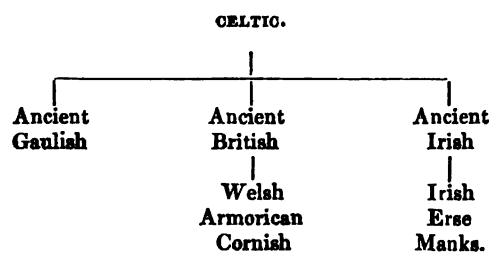
Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

He did not pursue his subject farther. But this clear separation of the Gothic from the Keltic tribes, whom most reasoners on the origin of the European nations had confounded, and whom many on the continent still confound, laid the foundation for the true history of ancient Europe, to those minds whose freedom from former prepossessions enabled them to feel the justice of this valuable discrimination.

Mr. Pinkerton, in his dissertation on the Scythians and Goths, endeavoured to verify the idea of the Bishop of Dromore, by quotations from ancient authorities; but he disfigured his work by an abuse of the Keltic nations; by attempting to add unauthorised chronologies; by some wrong citations; and by several untenable opinions and digressions, with which he embarrassed Dr. Percy's simple and judicious observations.

But to the two genera of languages pointed out by Dr. Percy, a third must be added, which prevails in the eastern regions of Europe; the Slavonian or Sarmatian. These genera present us with those three great sources, from which, the nations of the western regions of Europe, have chiefly derived their various population.



Preface to Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. xxiv.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

CORRESPONDING with this distinction of these languages, the most authentic facts that can be now gleaned from ancient history, and the most probable traditions that have been preserved in Europe, concur to prove, that it has been peopled by three great streams of population from the East, which have followed each other, at intervals so distinct, as to possess languages clearly separable from each other. The earliest of these, we shall find to have comprised the Kimmerian and Keltic race. The second consisted of the Scythian, Gothic, and German tribes; from whom most of the modern nations of continental Europe have descended. The third, and most recent, comprehends the Slavonian and Sarmatian nations, who were bordering on the second race, as they spread over Germany; and who have now established themselves in Poland, Bohemia, Russia, and their vicinities. It is from the two first genera of the European population that the ancient inhabitants of England successively descended.

ON the general origin of mankind, two fanciful, but unscientific opinions have, at different times, been started. One, that men have sprung fortuitously from the earth: the other, that there have been several aboriginal races. The first was a vulgar error of antiquity, arising from its ignorance of natural history, which philosophy has long since exploded, both from the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The other misconception, which has now been stretched, with that fertility of error which usually follows the desertion of the simple truth, into no fewer than seventeen primeval races by some Parisian dreamers, is also yielding to our increasing knowledge of physiology and geography.

Digitized by Google

The doubts on this subject have arisen partly from imperfect information, partly from mistaking specific for generical differences, and partly from a discreditable avidity to prefer any supposition to the invaluable, though brief account of the earliest and greatest historiographer of the Jewish nation.

THAT population has been, every where, the result of emigration from some primeval residence, is the belief of the most intelligent and impartial inquirers. We can trace, from historical documents, the colonization of many parts of the world; and the traditions of other nations sufficiently assure us, that they have been effusions from more ancient sources. Where history and tradition fail, we discern the same kind of origin, from the impressive attestations of analogous manners and languages. The unnecessary fables of various original races, as well as spontaneous animal vegetation, may therefore now be dismissed with equal discredit. Nations have branched off from preceding nations, sometimes by intentional emigration, and sometimes by accidental separation. War, commerce, want, caprice, turbulence, and pride, have, in various regions, contributed to disperse the human race into new settlements; and among those tribes which have frequented the sea, the casualties of the weather have often compelled undesigned colonizations.

THAT there has been some catastrophe, like an universal deluge, to which all authentic history must be posterior, is now becoming the belief of the most discerning geologists. The petrifactions of animal and vegetable substances, which are to be found in every part of the globe, in its rocks and on its mountains, far distant from the ocean, and of

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

which many species are extinct; and the gigantic animals which they prove to have existed, of whom history has left no notices, concur with the earliest traditions of almost all countries; and especially of those of whose ancient literature and transactions any fragments have reached us, to satisfy our reason of the certainty of this momentous event.

But the only ancient record, which connects a rational chronology with this awful revolution in physical nature — the Genesis of Moses — has authorised our best chronologers to place it about 2348 years before the Christian era. This period is, therefore, the historical limit of all credible antiquity; and precedes, by a long interval, every document which has survived to us. But if the human race were at this time renewed, it is to a much later date, that we must look for the beginnings of the British population.

The safe rule of Sir Isaac Newton, to admit no more causes of natural things, than are sufficient to account for their phenomena, may be efficaciously applied to determine the question, whether the human race has originated from one, or many primeval stocks; because the most judicious physiologists now agree, that there are no more varieties of form or manners among the numerous tribes of mankind, than such as the descendants of one pair may have exhibited, under the varying influences of different climates and countries; and of dissimilar food, customs, diseases, and occupations. As we may therefore believe, without credulity, the account of the most ancient and venerated history which we possess, that all nations have sprung from one original race; it is to its primitive parents in the first source, and in the second, to one or more of

Digitized by Google

their three descendants, who survived that catastrophe, in which the first diffusion of human population disappeared, that we must refer the various colonies of Britain whom we are about to enumerate.

THAT the re-peopling of a globe which is nearly twenty-four thousand miles in circumference should have been immediately effected, no reflecting mind will suppose; and the slow progress which population must have made over so large a surface, could not but be more gradual from the mountains, deserts, lakes, woods, and rivers, which divide its various regions, and obstruct human access.

THE impenetrable forests, ever increasing from the vegetative agencies of nature, till checked by human labour[2]; and the continual and deleterious marshes, which rain and rivers are, every year, producing and enlarging in all uninhabited countries, must have long kept mankind from spreading rapidly, or numerously, beyond their first settlements. These seem generally to have been made along the inland rivers, or on the maritime shores of the earth. Almost every where the high mountains are uninhabited, while the vallies and the plains abound with towns and villages.

No ancient history exhibits mankind as first inhabiting Europe. Although this is now the most important part of our globe; it was once to Asia, what the Americas were, until the last three centuries, to us — an unknown, and unexplored world. All the records of human transactions in the earliest times of our knowledge agree with the Mosaic, and with the researches of modern science

[2] Mr. Erdmann, so recently as 1826, found that in Permia immense forests were then covering nine-tenths of the soil. He entered Siberia by a forest of firs.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

and antiquarian curiosity, to place the commencement of population, art, and knowledge, in the eastern portions of the earth. Here men first appeared and multiplied; and from hence progressively spread into those wilder and ruder districts, where nature was living in all her unmolested, but dreary, vacant, and barbarous majesty.

In the plains of warm and prolific climates, which the human race first cultivated, ease, abundance, leisure, and enjoyment, were accompanied by an early civilization, with all its advantages and evils. As the experience of the latter has, in subsequent times, and in our own, driven many from their native soil and patriotic comforts, to pursue the shadows of their hopes in new and uncultivated regions; so it appears to have actuated several to similar emigrations, in the earliest periods of society. In all ages, mankind have grown up into two great classes, which have diverged into a marked distinction from each other. It has been usual to call one of these, in its connected ramifications, the civilized states of antiquity; and to consider the other, with much complacent contumely, as savage and barbarous tribes.

That the primeval tribes of mankind were savage brutes, is a theory which, although it has been adorned by the poetry of Lucretius and Horace, may be now deemed as credible as the diverging systems of two modern speculators, who have respectively deduced us from fishes and monkeys. The sober truth may rather be considered to be, that the survivors of the antediluvian race, and their immediate descendants, must have been a cultivated people; that improvement preceded barbarism; and that the wilder tribes were devi-

Digitized by Google

ations from the more civilized. Hence we may reasonably contemplate both these descriptions of society as the same people of whom the Nomadic, or Wandering, radiated like the modern settlers on the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Oronooko, from civilized communities, into new circumstances of life and residence; into desolate solitudes, often grand and picturesque, but for a long time comfortless and appalling: where nature reigned in a state of magnificence, as to her vegetable and animal subjects, but diffused for some time terror, penury, and disease, to all that was intellectual and human. It was impossible for any portion of the civilized population of the world, to wander from their domestic localities, and to penetrate far into these unpeopled regions, without changing the character and habits of their minds; or without being followed by a progeny, still more dissimilar to every thing which they had quitted. In some, the alteration was a deteriorating process, declining successively into absolute barbarism. But in the far greater number it became rather peculiarity than perversion, and a peculiarity not without beneficial operation on the ulterior advances of human society; for it is manifest to the impartial eye, as it calmly contemplates most of the less civilized populations which have come within the scope of our knowledge, that original forms of character, and many new and admirable habits and institutions, often grew up, in these abodes of want, exertion, independence, and vicissitudes. The loss of some of the improvements of happier society, was compensated by energies and principles, which that must necessarily sacrifice, or cannot obtain: and it will be nearer the actual truth, to consider

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

the barbarous and civilized states of antiquity, as possessed of advantages distinct from each other; and perhaps not capable of continuous union, although often becoming intermingled, for a time, with mutual improvement.

In our late age of the world, the term barbarian is still correctly applicable to many countries which we have visited; but it will be unjust to the ancestors of all modern Europe, not to consider, that the appellation had not anciently a meaning so directly appropriate. The Greeks denominated all nations as *barbaroi* but their own; although Egypt, Phenicia, Babylon, and Carthage had preceded them in civilization.

The rise of the two ancient grand divisions of mankind may be dated from their dispersion at the confusion of human language. When their unity was by this event broken up, and they had separated from each other to form independent tribes in new and wilder districts, the differences of their manners and social life must have soon afterwards begun. The choice of northern or southern regions—the effects of colder or warmer climate—the preference of indolent pasturage to laborious agriculture, and of changeable abode to the fixed mansions of a monotonous city, must have caused their posterities to become very dissimilar to each other. To many active spirits, it was then more gratifying to hunt the eatable animals in their woods, than to cut down the trees, grub up their roots, erect log-houses, or drain bogs: while some would submit to these patience-needing and slowly-rewarding toils. Hence the hunter state, the shepherd state, the rude first-clearers' state, and the industrious tillage state, would be arising in

Digitized by Google

many places *simultaneously* with each other, and with the more stationary and self-indulgent accumulation of city populations in those warmer and longer cultivated localities, where the arts, industry, and enjoyments of regular life under kings, hierarchies, and aristocracies, first appear to the researches of an investigating curiosity. All these conditions of society have been always found too coincident to have been originally converted into each other; and when we consider mankind to have early branched off into unconnected ramifications, separating for ever from their parent root, we shall perceive that their coincidence involves no inconsistency. We even now, at this late age of the world, see the Eskimaux, the wild Indian, the backsettler, and the cultivated Philadelphian, existing at the same time in North America; so did the Egyptian, the Scythian, and the Greek; so did high polish and rude barbarism at all times appear in disparted but coeval existence, whenever the ancient traveller or historian sufficiently extended his geographical inquiries. But all the early great divisions of mankind were not, at once, as strongly unlike, as the New Hollander, or Caffre, is to a modern European. They were at first to each other, what the Dorians were to the Athenians in Greece; the one a settled population, the other migratory and restless. And though we may retain the expression of civilization, as the character of the settled races, it will less mislead our imaginations, if we call the other portion of mankind the Nomadic race. These had improvements and civilization of their own, though of a sterner and more hardy nature. They differed in attainments from their more polished relatives; but were not in

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

all things their inferiors. It is unjust to degrade those with the appellation of barbarians, in the present meaning of the term, from whose minds, institutions, and manners, all that we now possess in civilization, superior to the most cultivated states of antiquity, has been principally derived. Our ancestors sprung from the great barbaric or Nomadic stock; and it may divest us of some of our unreasonable prejudices and false theories about them, if we make a rapid survey of the circumstances by which the two great classes of mankind have been principally distinguished.

Of these, THE CIVILIZED were those nations who, from their first appearance in history, have been found numerously and durably associated together; building fixed habitations; cultivating continuously the same soil; and fond of connecting their dwellings with each other into cities and towns, which, as external dangers pressed, they surrounded with walls. They multiplied inventions in the mechanic and manufacturing arts; allowed an individual property in ground and produce, to be acquired and transmitted; and guarded and perpetuated the appropriation, with all the terrors of law and civil power.

They became studious of quiet life, political order, social courtesy, pleasurable amusements, and domestic employments. They exercised mind in frequent and refined thought; pursued intellectual arts and studies; perpetuated their conceptions and reasonings by sculptured imagery, written language, and an improving literature; and valued those who excelled in mental studies. They promoted and preserved the welfare of their societies by well-arranged governments, which every citizen

Digitized by Google

was desirous to uphold; by a vigilant policy, which they contentedly obeyed; and by laws, wise in their origin and general tenor, but often pursuing human actions with inquisitorial severity; with vindictive jealousy; with sanguinary punishments, and with a minuteness and subtlety, which destroyed individual freedom, and bounded public improvement. They have usually loved religion; though they have made it a slavery, whose established superstitions it was treasonable to resist. They erected temples, oracles, and altars; they divided the energies and attributes of the Supreme Being, into distinct personalities, which they adored as divinities; made images and mythologies of each; devised and established a ceremonial worship, and permanent priesthood, which has usually been intimately connected with their political government; and made the sanctioned teachers of the belief, morals and main opinions of their people.

But these civilized nations, notwithstanding all their improvements, and from the operation of some, have degenerated into sensuality; into the debasing vices, and to effeminate frivolities. The love of money, and a rapaciousness for its acquisition; and the necessities and false emulation, which continual luxuries create, have dissolved their social morality, and substituted a refined, but persevering and ever-calculating selfishness, for that mutual benevolence which reason desires; which Christianity now enjoins; and which our best sympathies suggest. Superstition, irreligion, and despotism increase, as the moral attachments to probity and order lessen; and yet by their increase assist to undermine both loyalty and patriotism, as well as public happiness.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

FACTIOUS violences on the one hand; legal oppressions and persecutions on the other; and an augmenting soldiery, every day becoming dangerous to the authorities that need them, from a practical sense of their own importance and power; and every day enfeebled by inefficient chiefs, because the promotion of talent is dangerous to its employers, and is impeded by the claims of the interested and powerful; — have often increased the evils of a voluptuary civilization, till states have subsided from secret and selfish disaffection, into feeble and disunited masses; which enemies have shaken, and powerful invaders at last subdued. Their mental progress, from all these causes, has been usually checked into that limited and stationary knowledge, soon becoming comparative ignorance, into which, even the cultivation and social comforts of civilization have hitherto invariably sunk; and from which the irruptions, spirit, and agencies of the Nomadic tribes, or the newer kingdoms which they have founded, have repeatedly rescued the human race. Perhaps another marking feature may be mentioned of the political state of the ancient civilized nations — and this was the want of an hereditary and landed Aristocracy. A civic class of this sort, like all human inventions, has its own peculiar evils: but it is more connected with the public emancipation from either regal or sacerdotal despotism than is usually imagined — and accordingly it has chiefly prevailed among the Nomadic or barbaric nations, and perhaps originated among them. From them it has manifestly descended to modern Europe and to ourselves.

THE other important part of the ancient population — that from which we have sprung — which the civilized world always contemplated with dis-

Digitized by Google

dain, and frequently with horror, comprised those, who under various names, of which the Kimmerians, Kelts, Scythians, Goths, and Germans, are the most interesting to us, long preferred a wilder, roaming, and more independent life.

By these, the forests and the hills; the unbounded range of nature; the solitude of her retreats; the hardy penury of her heaths; the protection of her morasses; and the unrestricted freedom of personal exertion and individual humour; (though with all the privations, dangers, wars, and necessities that attend self-dependance, and even human vicinity, unassociated by effective government and vigilant laws,) have yet been preferred to crowded cities and confused habitations; to petty occupations and contented submission; to unrelaxing self-government and general tranquillity.

This Nomadic class of mankind was composed of distinct families, that multiplied into separate tribes, living insulated from each other; and rarely coalescing into nations; though sometimes confederating for the purposes of war and depredation. Their primeval state was, in some, that of the shepherd, and in others, of the hunter. Or if any migratory clans paused a while for agriculture, they quitted the soil after they had reaped the harvest; and sought out new plains to consume and to abandon; new woods to range, and new game to chase. Too fond of individual liberty — probably the first stimulus to many in their separation from civilized society in the ages that followed its first great fracture, — and too moveable and too jealous of restricting laws, to have a regular government, — they became fierce, proud, and iras-

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

cible; easily excited, rugged in manners, boisterous in temper, and implacable in resentments. Looking on the kingdoms and cities of refined life with contempt for its effeminate habits, and with the eye of rapacity for its tempting abundance, all their intercourse with it was war, depredation, and captivity. Sometimes multiplying too rapidly for the produce of their locality, they moved in large bodies to regions unoccupied, or incapable of resisting them; and, with their wives, families, and humble property, transported themselves forcibly from one country to another, to be often again, by some more numerous or warlike tribe, dispossessed of their new soil, or to be destroyed, in wars which were usually exterminations. Revolting as these habits are to our better and happier feelings, yet they served at that period to penetrate the wild earth; to subdue the exuberance of excessive vegetation, and to begin the first processes of preparing the unpeopled world for the cultivation and settlements of an improved posterity. They levelled some forests, and made roads through others: they found out the fords of rivers, the passes of the mountains, and the permeable parts of the insalubrious marshes. Their wars and depredations; their ravages and restless dispositions, were perpetually clearing new ground for human cultivation; and making new channels for human intercourse, through unknown countries. Their vicissitudes, though perpetuating their ferocity, yet kept them under particular excitement; and nourished hardy and active bodies.

BUILDING their rude huts in the woods for easier defence, every invader that dislodged them, and proclaimed his triumph by his conflagrations, only

Digitized by Google

drove them to explore and people more inaccessible solitudes; and rendered the district they quitted, unfit for barbaric occupation; but more adapted to become the residence of peaceful colonists. By their desultory movements, the domesticated animals, most useful to mankind, were diffusely scattered; the savage beasts destroyed, and new germs of future tribes were every where deposited; till some branches or other of the Nomadic tribes had moved, from the Asiatic Bosphorus, to the farthest shores of the European continent. Of these, the Kimmerians were the most advanced in the north-west; and the Kelts towards the west and south.

In this state, a new description of society became perpetuated and diffused, in which the greatest degree of individual liberty was exerted and allowed, that could be made compatible with any social combination.

Liberty was the spring and principle of their political associations; and pervaded the few civil institutions which their habits required, and their humours permitted. Neither chief nor priest was suffered to have much power. Influence, not authority, was the characteristic of the shadowy government which they respected; nobility arose among them from successful war; and petty conquests of an hostile soil laid the foundation of a territorial aristocracy. The power and property of these fortunate adventurers being held, as they had been acquired, by the sword, they were governable only so far as they chose to assent; and the free man who lived in society with them, being neither less warlike, less irritable, nor more submitting, it was the sacred custom of almost all their tribes,

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

that a national council should be an inseparable portion of the sovereignty or civil government of each; in which all legislation should originate; by which the executive power of the chosen ruler should be continually controuled; in which all general measures of the state should be considered and determined, and all taxes imposed; and to which, every freeman that was aggrieved, might appeal for redress. We have direct historical evidence of this fact among all the German and Gothic tribes; and sufficient intimation that it had once prevailed among the Kimmerians and Kelts. Hence, while a political submission became the mark and practice of the civilised, individual independence and political liberty became the characteristic of the Nomadic. A fierce and jealous spirit of controul never left them. As each man chose to be principally his own avenger, instead of leaving, like the civilised, the punishment of wrong to the magistrate and the laws, their feuds were unceasing and inveterate. A martial temper and habit became necessary to their existence; and the penury which attended their aversion to peaceful drudgery, their mutual desolations, and their wandering life, compelled them to seek both their food and comforts from war and rapine.

YET amid these habits, a fearless and enterprising spirit, and a personal dignity and highminded temper were nourished; and the hardy and manly virtues became pleasing habits. In this life of constant activity, want, privation, courage, vigilance, endurance, and exertion, the female virtues were called perpetually into action; and their uses were felt to be so important, that the fair sex obtained among all the tribes of ancient Germany a

Digitized by Google

rank, an estimation, and an attachment, which were unknown in all the civilised world of antiquity; and which the spirit of Christianity has since matured and completed.

Most of our improvements are, for a time, incompatible with each other; and must be separately pursued and successively attained. Hence, the division of mankind into the Nomadic and the Civilised conditions of society has been instrumental to a greater progress, and productive of more blessings, than an uniform and simultaneous civilisation of all would have occasioned.

The subjected temper and patient habits of civilised life acquire merits, which the fierce and enterprising spirit of the wilder state cannot attain; but this possesses an originality, an activity, a strength, and a vigorous virtue, which gives civilisation new energies; dissipates its corruptions, and breaks its enslaving bonds. All nations have been most improved by due mixtures of these two great classes. The earlier civilised have been repeatedly disciplined, and, in the end, benefited by the invasions and conquests of the Nomadic. Many debasing vices have been checked: many injurious governments and institutions dissolved; and many pertinacious errors destroyed. And of those ruder nations, from which the British population has been formed, it will be obvious to every inquirer, that some of their peculiar habits and institutions, which were well adapted to their freer life, and which originated from their peculiar necessities and circumstances, have become the source of our greatest improvements in legislature, society, knowledge, and general comfort. The Nomadic mind is a mind of great energy and sagacity, in

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

the pursuits and necessities peculiar to that state; and has devised many principles of laws, government, customs, and institutions, which have been superior to others that the earlier civilised have established.

THE Saxons, Franks, Burgundians, Goths, and Northmen have been distinguished by these characteristics.

THAT these nations were ignorant of Grecian and Roman literature, and of the sciences of Egypt, was the consequence of their early separation from the civilised communities, before these intellectual blessings had been attained, or much diffused; and of their subsequent loss of intercourse with those nations, when more generally enlightened.

A STATE of ignorance must, in all countries, and in every individual, precede that of knowledge; because knowledge cannot be intuitive, though the power to receive and to apprehend it be innate. In whatever world the mind exists, it must acquire the knowledge of what that world contains, after its birth; after its senses have begun to act, and to be acted on by the objects and events which it may contain. Hence, every nation must pass gradually from its times of ignorance, to its period of intellectual eminence, and general information.

BUT although our Nomadic ancestors were long without the cultivation of knowledge and literature, they were not therefore mentally inert.

THERE is an education of mind, distinct from the literary, which is gradually imparted by the contingencies of active life. In this, which is always the education of the largest portion of mankind, our ancestors were never deficient.

THE operation of this practical, but powerful in-

Digitized by Google

tellect, may be traced in the wisdom and energy of their great political mechanisms and municipal institutions. It pervades their ancient laws; and is displayed in full dimensions, as to our Saxon and Norman ancestors, in that collection of our native jurisprudence, which Bracton has transmitted to us. The system of our common law, there exhibited, was admirably adapted to their wants and benefit; and has mainly contributed to form the national bulwarks and that individual character, by which England has been so long enriched and so vigorously upheld.

It is well known, that, of the two states which we have been considering, literary and scientific knowledge has been the earliest acquired by the civilised; and has always continued to be, with some partial fluctuations, their peculiar property; continually, though often tardily increasing, till they reached at length that line of limitation, which their manners and institutions finally create.

But the natural capacity and the intellectual activity, though with a different application, have been equal in both classes. Influenced by dissimilar circumstances, and directed to distinct subjects, the mental power of each may have appeared to be disproportionate, when it was only diversified; but its exertion among those called barbarians, in their forest-habitations, in their predatory expeditions, in their rude councils and national wars, was unceasing; and so finally effective, that the genius of civilised Rome, repeatedly endangered by their hostilities, was at last subdued by their superior energies.

These two states seem to have been in all ages so contemporaneous, and to have pervaded the

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

world so equally together, and in such constant vicinity, that history has recorded no era, since the separation of mankind at Babel, in which either has been extinct. On the contrary, the settler and the wanderer; the restless and the tranquil; the hunter Indian; the pastoral Tartar; the Arab plunderer, and the polished lover of city habits and of peaceful life, have, under different denominations of tribes and nations, at all times co-existed. As far as history ascends, the world has been agitated and benefited by the perpetual diversity. This fact of their unceasing co-existence confirms the idea, that the Nomadic were originally but branches of the civilised, as the migratory settlers on the Ohio and Missouri in our days are the effusions of other states, more advanced and improved: and, but that such men cannot now go, where civilisation from its commanding extent, and with its transforming effects, will not soon pursue them, their posterity would become the Scythians and Goths of modern times; and exhibit an example of the formation of new barbaric tribes.

The nations that appeared the earliest in the civilised state, were the Egyptians, Phenicians, Assyrians, Chinese, and Babylonians; and these have never been known in the Nomadic or barbaric state. In a later age, partly offsets from these, or from a kindred seed, the Carthaginians, Greeks, Persians, Hindus, and Romans emerged; of whom the Greeks and Romans began, at first, to act in their uncivilised condition.

Some of these nations — both of the earlier and the later improved — the Phenicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks, either visited Britain, or were acquainted with it; and the Romans ultimately

Digitized by Google

conquered and occupied it. But the great masses of the populations, which have successively planted themselves in the British islands, have sprung from the Nomadic classes. The earliest of these that reached the northern and western confines of Europe, the Kimmerians and Kelts, may be regarded as our first ancestors; and from the German or Gothic nations who formed, with the Scythians, the second great flood of population into Europe, our Anglo-Saxon and Norman ancestors proceeded. The Sarmatic, or third Nomadic race, have never effected any settlements among us; nor reached those states of the Continent from which they could have troubled us. England has seen them only as visitors and friends.

The migrations by land precede those by sea. The facilities of movement are greater: while the ocean is a scene of danger, that repels adventure, as long as other avenues of hope, or safety, are as accessible. But the chronology of these transplantations cannot now be determined. It is most probable, that population advanced contemporaneously, though not with an equal ratio, from both land and sea. The sea-coasts, nearest to the first civilised states, were gradually visited and peopled; as Greece from Egypt and Tyre; — and the islands of the Archipelago and the Mediterranean, as well as Africa and Spain, were colonised by the Phenicians. But the greatest waves of population have rolled inland from the east. Tribe after tribe moved over the Bosphorus into Europe, until at length the human race penetrated its forests and morasses to the frozen regions in the north, and to the farthest shores of the ocean on the west. Our islands derived their population chiefly from

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

branches of the inland hordes of Europe, though the habitual visits of the maritime nations of antiquity, the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and their Spanish settlements, were not likely to have occurred without leaving some colonial and permanent results.[3]

[3] It is highly interesting to an Englishman, who has sprung from the uncivilised races of antiquity, to contemplate the deities and sculptures of Egypt now collected in the British Museum. He there sees the venerated productions of the earliest civilised nation reposing in the metropolis of the descendants of one of the earth's most distant Nomadic tribes. When Egypt was in her splendour, England was barbaric and unknown, and scarcely suspected to be existing at the supposed end of the habitable world. England has now reached one of the highest summits of human civilisation; and Egypt has sunk into our ancestors' darkest state, without their free and hardy virtues. Osiris and Isis transported from the worshipping Nile to the Thames, to be but the gaze and criticism of public curiosity! The awing head of Memnon in London! There is a melancholy sublimity in this revolution of human greatness; yet it soon changes into a feeling of triumph in the recollection, that were Egypt now in her proudest state, she would not be, in any thing, our superior. Indeed she would rather be, in the comparison, no less inferior to us in the present state of our arts, sciences, manufactures, commerce, cultivated mind, and national greatness, than our Barbaric ancestors would have been deemed by her in the period of her Rhamses Sesostris, and Amenoph, and of the other great monarchs with whom their gigantic temples and decyphered inscriptions have lately brought us acquainted.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

The Kimmerian and Keltic Nations were the earliest Inhabitants of the West of Europe.— A brief Outline of their Migrations and Expeditions.— Settlement of their Colonies in Britain.— Welsh Traditions on this Subject.

CHAP. II.

FROM the languages already remarked to have prevailed in Europe, we have clear indications of the three distinct and successive streams of population, to which we have alluded, because we find two separate families of languages to have pervaded the northern and western regions; with a third, on its eastern frontier; each family being peculiar to certain states. These three languages may be classed under the general names of the Keltic, the Gothic, and the Slavonic; and from the localities in which we find them, and from the names of the ancient nations who are first recorded to have inhabited those localities, they may be also called the Kimmerian, the Scythian, and the Sarmatian. Of these, the Welsh, the Gaelic, the Irish, the Cornish, the Armoric, the Manks, and the ancient Gaulish tongue, are the related languages which have proceeded from the KIMMERIAN or KELTIC source. The Anglo-Saxon, the Franco-theotisc, the Mæso-gothic, and the Islandic of former times; and the present German, Suabian, Swiss, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Orkneyan, English, and Lowland Scotch, are ramifications of the great GOTHIC or SCYTHIAN stock. The third genus of European languages, the ancient Sarmatian, or modern Slavonic, appears in

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

the present Polish and Russian, and in their adjacent dialects.

THE languages, classed under each of the above heads, are so visibly related together, as to make so many distinct families, issuing from the same parent stocks; but each stem is so dissimilar to the others, as to mark a different source and chronology of origin. The local positions in Europe, of the different nations using these tongues, are also evidence of their successive chronology. The Keltic or Kimmerian is in the farthest part of the west, in the British islands, and on the western shores of France. The Scythian or Gothic languages occupy the great body of the European continent, from the ocean to the Vistula, and have spread into England. In the eastern parts of Europe, most contiguous to Asia, and also extending into Asia, the Sarmatian or Slavonic tongues are diffused. So that we perceive at once, that the Kimmerian or Keltic nations, to have reached the westerly position, must have first inhabited Europe: that the Scythian or Gothic tribes must have followed next, and have principally peopled it; and that the Sarmatian, or Slavonic people, have been the latest colonists. Other nations have entered it, at more recent periods, as the Huns and the Romans; and some others have established partial settlements, as the Lydians in Tuscany; the Greeks at Marseilles, and in Italy; the Phenicians and Carthaginians in Spain. But the three stocks, already noticed, are clearly the main sources of the ancient population of the European continent, in its northern and western portions.

THE most authentic accounts of ancient history confirm the preceding statement.

Digitized by Google

THAT the Kimmerians were in Europe before the Scythian tribes, we learn from the information of Herodotus, the father of Grecian history. He states, apparently from the information of the Scythians themselves, that the Kimmerians anciently possessed those regions in Europe which the Scythians were occupying in his time.[1] And these Scythians were then spread from the Danube, towards the Baltic and the north.

IT cannot now be ascertained, when the Kimmerians first passed out of Asia over the Bosphorus, which they named; but that they were in Europe, in the days of Homer, is obvious, because he mentions them in his Odyssey[2]; and he appears to have lived, at least eight hundred years before the Christian æra. That he was acquainted with the position of the Kimmerians, in the north-eastern parts of Europe, is three times asserted by Strabo.[3]

THAT the Kimmerians were inhabiting these places, about seven hundred years before our Saviour's advent, we have direct historical evidence; because it was above this period, if not before, that they were attacked by the Scythians in these settlements.[4] Overpowered by this invasion, the Kim-

[1] Herod. Melpom. s. 11. I have adopted the Greek orthography of the K, Κιμμεριοι, because it expresses the proper pronunciation of the word.

[2] Κιμμεριων ανδρων, Od. Δ. v. 14. He places them on the Pontus, at the extremities of the ocean; and describes them as covered with those mists and clouds, which popular belief has attached to the northern regions of the Euxine. The Turkish name Karah Deksi, the Greek Μαυρο Θαλασσα, and our Black Sea, imply the same opinion. Bayer says, that he has had it from eye-witnesses, that all the Pontus and its shores are infested by dense and dark fog. Comm. Acad. Petrop. t. ii. p. 421.

[3] Strabo, Geog. p. 12. 38. 222.

[4] Herodotus states this invasion to have occurred in the reign of Ardyes, the son of Gyges, lib. i. s. 15. Ardyes reigned from 680

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

merians of these districts moved from Europe into Asia Minor; and afflicted its maritime regions with calamities, from their warfare, which Ionia remembered with such horror, as to believe that they sprang from the infernal regions; to the neighbourhood of which even Homer consigns them.[5]

The part of the Kimmerian population, which the Scythians thus disturbed, was then occupying the peninsula, which from them obtained the name of the Kimmerian Chersonesus; and its vicinity. Their name was also retained, after their departure, in the adjoining Bosphorus, in a mountain, and in a city on the peninsula, where the isthmus was protected by a ditch and a rampart. In these parts of Europe they had possessed great power, before the Scythians attacked them[6]; and Herodotus says, that in his time, several Kimmerian walls and ports were to be seen there.[7] The Turks are now the masters of this country, but their dominion begins to decline.

The retreat of the Kimmerians, who fled before the Scythians, has given rise to the assertion, that they conquered Asia, because what the Romans called Asia Minor, was by the more ancient Greeks usually denominated Asia; but it is clear that their irruption was along the sea-coast, and did not ex-

to 631 years before Christ. Strabo places the same event in Homer's time or before, on the authority of some other historians, p. 38. 222. We can scarcely reduce any of the facts of ancient classical history, before the Persian war, to exact chronology.

[5] "As Homer knew that the Kimmerians were in the north and west regions on the Bosphorus, he made them to be near Hades; and perhaps according to the common opinions of the Ionians concerning that race." Strabo, Geog. p. 222.

[6] Strabo, lib. xi. p. 756. 475. Ed. Amst. 1707.

[7] Herod. Melpom. lib. iv. s. 12.

Digitized by Google

tend beyond the maritime districts.[8] One of their chiefs who conducted it was called Lygdamis; he penetrated into Lydia and Ionia, took Sardis, and died in Cilicia. This destructive incursion, which succeeded probably because it was unexpected, has been mentioned by some Greek poets[9], as well as by Herodotus[10], Callisthenes[11], and Strabo.[12] They were at length expelled from Asia Minor by the father of Crœsus.[13]

When the Scythians first attacked them on the European side of their Bosphorus, their endangered tribes held a council; the chiefs and their friends wished to resist the invaders, but the others preferred a voluntary emigration. Their difference of opinion produced a battle, and the survivors abandoned their country to the Scythians.[14] But while one portion went under Lygdamis to Asia, the more warlike and larger part of the Kimmerian nations, according to the geographers cursorily mentioned by Plutarch[15], receded westward from the Scythians, and proceeded to inhabit the remoter regions of Europe, extending to the German Ocean. "Here," he adds, "it is said that they live in a dark, woody country, where the sun is seldom seen, from their many lofty and spreading trees, which reach into the interior as far as the Hercynian forest." But whether their progress to

[8] Herod. Clio, s. 15.

[9] By Callinus in his poems, who calls them the "impetuous Kimmerians." Strab. lib. xiv. p. 958., and by Callimachus, Hym. in Dian. 252.

[10] Herod. Clio, s. 6. Ibid. Melpom.

[11] Ap. Strab. p. 930.

[12] Strab. Geog. lib. i. p. 106. et al.

[13] Herod. Clio. s. 16.

[14] Herod. Melpom. s. 11.

[15] Plutarch in Mario.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

these parts was the consequence of the Scythian attack, or had preceded it, is of little importance to us to ascertain. The fact is unquestionable, that the Kimmerians anciently diffused the mselves towards the German Ocean.

THE history of the Kimmerians, from their leaving the eastern Bosphorus to their reaching the Cimbric Chersonesus on the Baltic, has not been perpetuated. The traditions of Italy, and even an ancient historian intimate, that Kimmerians were in those regions near Naples, where the ancient mythologists place the country of the dead.[16] Their early occupation of Europe and extensive dispersion divest this circumstance of any improbability. They who wandered across Europe from the Thracian Bosphorus into Jutland, may have also migrated southward into Italy, like the Goths and Lombards of a future age. But as nations, in the Nomadic state, have little other literature than funeral inscriptions, the brief and vague songs of their bands, wild incantations, or rude expressions of martial trophies, divested of all circumstance or chronology, it is not till they assail the welfare of the civilised, and become a part of their national history, that we have any notice of their transactions; and often not till this period, any indication of their existence. But two intimations have been preserved to us of the Kimmerians, which probably express the general outline of their history.

[16] Strabo says, "And they deem this place Plutonian, and say that the Kimmerians are there; and they who sail thither, first sacrifice to propitiate the subterraneous demons, which the priests exhort them to do, on account of the profit which they derive from the offering. There is a fountain of river water, but all abstain from this, as they think it the water of the Styx. Geog. p. 171.—Ephorus applying this place to the Kimmerians," &c. Ib. p. 375.

Digitized by Google

They are stated to have often made plundering incursions[17], and they were considered by Posidonius, to whose geographical works Strabo was often indebted, as a predatory and wandering nation.[18]

The Cimbri were Kimmerians.

In the century before Cæsar they became known to the Romans by the harsher pronunciation of Kimbri[19], in that formidable irruption from which Marius rescued the Roman state. At this period a great body of them quitted their settlements on the Baltic, and, in conjunction with other tribes, entered the great Hercynian forest, which covered the largest part of ancient Germany. Repulsed by the *Boioi*, they descended on the Danube. Penetrating into Noricum and Illyricum, they defeated the Roman consul Narbo; and a few years afterwards, having by their ambassadors to Rome solicited in vain the senate, to assign them lands for their habitation, for which they offered to assist the Romans in their wars, they defeated four other consuls in as many successive battles, and entered Gaul. Having ravaged all the country between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, they spread into Spain, with the same spirit of desolation. Repulsed

[17] Strabo, p. 106. This habit no doubt occasioned the word Cimbri to signify robbers among the Germans, as Plutarch remarks in his life of Marius.

[18] Posid. ap. Strab. p. 450.

[19] That the Κιμμεριοι of the Greeks were the Kimbroi of the Greeks, and Cimbri (Kimbri) of the Latin writers, was not only the opinion of Posidonius, whom Strabo quotes, lib. vii. p. 293., but of the Greeks generally: "quum *Græci* Cimbros Cimmeriorum nomine afficiant," ib. Diodorus Siculus expressly says, that to those who were called Κιμμεριοις, the appellation of Κιμβρων was applied in process of time, and by the corruption of language, lib. v. p. 309. Plutarch, in his life of Marius, also identifies the Kimbri with the Kimmerioi. He says, "From these regions, when they came into Italy, they began their march, being anciently called Kimmerioi, and in process of time Kimbroi."

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

there by the Celtiberi, they returned to France; and joining with the Teutones, who had also wandered from the Baltic, they burst into Italy with a force, that had accumulated in every region which they had traversed. Rome was thrown into consternation by their progress; and it required all the talents and experience of Marius, Sylla, and the best Roman officers to overthrow them.[20]

THE great mass of the Kimbric population perished in these conflicts. The Romans are stated to have destroyed, from two to three hundred thousand, in two battles. It is impossible to read of human slaughter without lamenting it, or without feeling some abhorrence of those, however famed as heroes, by whom it has been effected. But in this war, the Kimbri provoked the destruction, by their desolating aggressions: and considering the spirit and customs of barbaric ferocity, which they maintained, and their national restlessness, their disappearance was advantageous to the progress of civilisation, and to the interests of humanity. Marius did not, like Cæsar, go into Gaul in search of a sanguinary warfare. He obeyed the call of his country to rescue it from a calamitous invasion. His successes filled Rome with peculiar joy, and were sung by the poet Archias, whom Cicero's eloquence has made illustrious.[21]

THE rest of the Kimmerian nation on the Continent remained in a feeble and scattered state.

[20] Liv. Epit. 63—67. Florus, lib. iii. c. 3. Oros. lib. v. c. 16. Strabo, lib. v. Plut. Vit. Mar. We have the names of three of their kings from Livy, Plutarch, and Florus: these are Bolus, Bojorisc, and Teutobochus.

[21] Even the illiterate Marius was pleased with this Parnassian effusion. "Ipsi illi C. Mario, qui durior ad hæc studia videbatur, jucundus fuit." Cicer. Or. pro Arch. c. 9.

Digitized by Google

They are noticed by Strabo, as existing in his time on the Baltic[22]; and are more briefly alluded to by Pliny.[23] Both these writers represent them on the north-western shores of Europe, or on those coasts of the German Ocean from which the Saxons and Danes made afterwards expeditions into Britain.

In the days of Tacitus, this ancient nation had almost ceased to exist on the continent of Europe; but his expressions imply their former power and celebrity. When he mentions the Kimbri who, in his time, remained in the peninsula of Jutland, he says, "A small state now, but great in glory; the marks of their ancient fame yet remain, far and wide, about the Elbe; by whose extent you may measure the power and greatness of this people, and accredit the reported numbers of their army." They were existing, or their fame continued in those parts, in the days of Claudian.[24]

Thus far we have proceeded upon the authentic authorities, which remain to us in the classical writers, of the primeval population of Europe. From these it is manifest that the earliest inhabitants of the north of Europe were the Kimmerians or Kimbri; and that they spread over it from the Kimmerian Bosphorus to the Kimbric Chersonesus; that is, from Thrace and its vicinity, to Jutland and the German Ocean: to that ocean from which the passage is direct to Britain; — the regular voyage

[22] He remarks that, in his time, Kimbri continued to inhabit their former settlements on the Baltic, and had sent a present of one of their sacred cauldrons to Augustus, lib. vi. p. 449.

[23] Nat. Hist. lib. iv. c. 27. and 28. The latter passage intimates Inland Cimbri near the Rhine, as well as the Cimbri in the peninsula. In lib. vi. c. 14. he mentions Cimmerii in Asia, near the Caspian.

[24] Tacitus de Morib. Germ. Claudian calls the Northern Ocean by their name, "Cimbrica Thetis." Cons. Hon. lib. iv.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

in our times from Hamburgh to England or Scotland.

Kimmerians and Cymry in Britain.

THE habit of moveable nations in the uncivilized or nomadic state, would lead us to infer, as these Kimmerii or Kimbri are characterised as a wandering nation, and are shown by all that remains of their history to have been so, that at some early period, after they reached the shores of the German ocean, they crossed it in their rude vessels to Great Britain. This reasonable supposition, analogous to all that we know of the customs of such nations, and of the colonization of other parts of the world, has a remarkable support in the name and traditions of the Welsh, and their ancient British literature. It is agreed by the British antiquaries, that the most ancient inhabitants of our island were called Cymry (pronounced Kumri): they are so named in all that remains of the ancient British literature. The Welsh, who are their descendants, have always called themselves Cymry, and have given the same appellation to the earliest colonists of our island; and as the authorities already referred to, prove, that the Κιμμεριοι or Kimbri were the ancient possessors of the northern coasts of the Germanic Ocean, and attempted foreign enterprises, it seems to be a safe and reasonable inference, that the Cymry of Britain originated from the continental Kimmerians.[25] That a district, in the northern part of England, was inhabited by a part of the ancient British nation, and called Cum-

[25] Tacitus mentions a circumstance favourable to this deduction. He says of the Œstii on the Baltic, that their language resembled the British, "lingua Britannicæ proprior." De Mor. Germ. If the opinion suggested in the text be true, the Œstii must have been a Kimmerian tribe.

Digitized by Google

bria, whence the present Cumberland, is a fact favourable to this presumption.

THE Danish traditions of expeditions and conquests in Britain, from Jutland and its vicinity, long before our Saviour's birth, which Saxo Grammaticus has incorporated into his history, may here be noticed. He is an authority too vague to be trusted alone; but he is evidence of the traditions of his countrymen, and these may claim that attention, when they coincide with those of the ancient British, which they would not otherwise deserve. They add something to the probability of early migrations, or expeditions from these regions into our islands, although they must not be confounded with historical facts.

Hu Cadarn.

The historical triads of the Welsh connect themselves with these suppositions in a very striking manner.[26] They state that the Cymry were the first inhabitants of Britain, before whose arrival it was occupied by bears, wolves, beavers, and oxen with large protuberances.[7] They add, that Hu

[26] The Welsh have several collections of historical triads; which are three events coupled together, that were thought by the collector to have some mutual analogy. It is the strange form into which their bards, or ancient writers, chose to arrange the early circumstances of their history. One of the most complete series of their triads has been printed in the Archaiology of Wales, vol. ii. p. 57—75. It was printed from a MS. dated 1601, and the writer of it states that he had taken them out of the books of Caradoc of Llancarvan, and of John Breckfa. Caradoc lived in the twelfth century. Breckfa was much later.

[27] It may not be uninteresting to translate the whole triad:—"Three names have been given to the isle of Britain since the beginning. Before it was inhabited, it was called Clas Merddin (literally the country with sea cliffs), and afterwards Fel Ynis (the island of honey). When government had been imposed upon it by Prydain, the son of Aedd the Great, it was called Ynys Prydain (the island of Prydain); and there was no tribute to any but to the race of the Kymry, because they first obtained it; and before them, there were no more

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

Cadarn, or Hu the Strong, or Mighty, led the nation of the Kymry through the Hazy, or German Ocean, into Britain, and to Llydaw, or Armorica, in France; and that the Kymry came from the eastern parts of Europe, or the regions where Constantinople now stands.[28] Though we would not convert Welsh traditions into history, where they stand alone, it cannot be unreasonable to remember them, when they coincide with the classical authorities. In the present case the agreement is striking. The Kimmerians, according to the authorities already stated, proceeded from the vicinity of the Kimmerian Bosphorus to the German Ocean: and the Welsh deduce their ancestors, the Cymry, from the regions south of the Bosphorus. The Welsh indeed add the name of their chieftain, and that a division of the same people settled in Armorica. But if the memory of Lygdamis, who led the Kimmerian emigration to Asia, and of Brennus, who marched with the Kelts against Greece, were preserved in the countries which they overran, so might the name of Hu Cadarn, who conducted some part of the western emigrations, be remembered in the island which he colonised.[29] That Armorica, or Bretagne, was peopled by a race of men similar to those who inhabited Britain, is veri-

men alive in it, nor any thing else but bears, wolves, beavers, and the oxen with the high prominence." Triad 1. Arch. v. ii. p. 57.

[28] "The three pillars of the nation of the isle of Britain. First, Hu Gadarn, who led the nation of the Cymry first to the isle of Britain; and from the country of Summer, which is called Deffrobani, they came; this is where Constantinople is: and through the hazy ocean they came to the island of Britain, and to Llydaw, where they have remained." Triad 4. p. 57.

[29] Pausanias has preserved the names of many of the kings of the Kelts who invaded Greece. So, Livy has transmitted to us those of the Keltic leaders who attacked Italy in the time of the first Tarquin.

Digitized by Google

CHAP II.

fied by the close resemblance of the languages of the two countries.

Manners of the Kimmerians and Cimbri.

As we have traced the probable identity of the Kymry with the Kimmerii, and the actual identity of these with the Kimbri, it will be right to add the few circumstances, of the manners of these ancient people, which the classical writers have transmitted. They appear to have been such as might be expected from the earliest emigrants of the civilised stock, who diverged the farthest from their primitive seats of civilisation. But as no Tacitus took the trouble to study their internal customs, we know nothing of their polity or national institutions. The repulsive features that most struck the attention of their enemies are nearly all that is recorded about them. They were too much dreaded or hated, to be carefully inspected or favourably delineated.

Ephorus said of the Kimmerians, that they dwelt in subterraneous habitations, which they called argillas, communicating by trenches.[30] It is certainly a curious analogy of language, that argel, in the language of the Cymry, or British, means a covert, a place covered over.[31] This mode of habitation seems to have been the primitive

[30] Ap. Strabo, Geo. lib. v. p. 375.

[31] The word occurs in the ancient Welsh poetry, as in the Afallenau of Merddhin,

a dyf yn *argel* yn argoedydd,-
will come in the *covert* in the lofty woods.
1 W. Archaiol. p. 152.

It is also used in the Englynion Beddaw of Taliessin:

Bet Llia Gwitel in *argel* ardudwy
dan y guellt ac guevel.

The grave of Llia the Gwyddelian in the *covert* of Ardudwy, under the grass and withered leaves.
1 Archaiol. p. 80.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

state of barbaric life. The Troglodytes of Asia are said to have lived in caves; and Tacitus describes some of the ruder German tribes as dwelling under ground. The practice of several animals which burrow in the earth may have suggested the custom; and it suits that savage state into which even the emigrants from civilised society may lapse, among woods and marshes, want and warfare, if they lose the knowledge of the mechanic arts, or the tools which these require. Ephorus added, that they had an oracle deep under ground. The Kimbri swore by a brazen bull, which they carried with them. In battle they appeared with helmets representing fierce beasts gaping, or some strange figures; and added a high floating crest to make them look taller. They used white shining shields, and iron mail, and either the battle-axe, or long and heavy swords. They thought it base to die of a disease, and exulted in a military death, as a glorious and happy end.[32]

CALLIMACHUS applies to these people the epithet horse-milkers.[33] This incident corresponds with the preceding accounts. The attachment to mare's milk has been common to most nations in their uncivilised state. Most rude and poor nations drink the milk of the animals they ride: as the Arabs of the desart use that of their camels. This habit suits their moveability, scanty property, small supply of food, and a sterile or uncultivated country.

THE religious rites of the Kimmerians included occasionally human sacrifices; one of the most

[32] Plut. in Mario. Val. Max. l. ii. c. 6.
[33] Callim. Hym. in Dian, v. 252.

Digitized by Google

ancient and universal superstitions, which affected and disgraced mankind in the first stages of their idolatrous and polytheistic worship. Strabo, after remarking of the Kimbri, that their wives accompanied them in war, says that many hoary priestesses of their oracle followed, clothed in white linen garments bound with a brazen girdle, and with naked feet. These women, with swords in their hands, sought the captives through the army, and threw them into a brass vessel of the size of twenty amphora. Then one of the prophetesses, ascending an elevation, stabbed them singly, as suspended above the cauldron; and made her divinations from the manner in which the blood flowed into it. The other assistants of the horrible superstition opened the bodies, and predicted victory from the inspection of the bowels. In their conflicts, they used a species of immense drum; for they struck upon skins stretched over their war chariots, which emitted a very powerful sound.[34] Plutarch describes the women to have been placed on their waggons in the conflict with Marius; and when the men gave way in the battle, to have killed those who fled, whether parents or brothers. They strangled their infants at the same time, and threw them under the wheels, while fighting the Romans, and at last destroyed themselves rather than survive the calamity. These descriptions lead us to recollect some analogous passages of Tacitus concerning the Britons at the period of the Roman invasion. He describes women, with firebrands in their hands, running like furies among the army of the Britons in Anglesey; and adds, that they

[34] Strabo, lib. vii. p. 451.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

stained their altars with the blood of their captives; and consulted their gods by the fibres of men. He mentions also, that before their destruction of the colony at Camelodunum, "Women, agitated with the prophetic fury, sang its approaching ruin."[35]

The Kelts

But upon investigating the remains of antiquity, we find another ancient people, placed in some of the western regions of Europe, at the time when Greek history begins. They were called Κελτοι, and afterwards Γαλαται; and Cæsar says of them, that they called themselves Celtæ, or Keltæ, though the Romans gave them the appellation of Galli.[36]

sprang from Kimmerians.

The Keltoi, to follow the Greek orthography of the word, appear to have been one of the branches of the Kimmerian stock. The term Kimmerian, like German, or Gaul, was a generic appellation. The people to whom it extended had also specific denominations. Thus, part of the Kimmerians who invaded Asia, under Ligdamis, were likewise called Trerones, or Treres.[37] That the Keltæ were Kimmerians is expressly affirmed by Arrian in two

[35] Tacitus Annal. lib. xiv. Stabat pro litore diversa acies, densa armis virisque, intercursantibus feminis. In modum furiarum, veste ferali, crinibus dejectis, faces preferebant—Nam cruore captivo adolere aras; et hominum fibris consulere deos fas habebant—Et feminæ in furore turbatæ, adesse exitium canebant.

[36] Cæsar. Comment. de Bell. Gall. lib. i. s. 1. Pausanias says of these people, "They have but lately called themselves γαλαται. They anciently called themselves κελτοι, and so did others," p. 6. And that γαλαται was but another appellation of the κελτοι, see Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 308. ed. Hanov. 1604. So Origin calls the Druids of Gaul, Γαλατων δρυαδας, adv. Cels. Galatai seems to be a more euphonous pronunciation of Keltoi; and Galli is probably but the abbreviation of Galatai. Strabo also says, all this nation whom they now call Gallikon or Galatikon, p. 298.

[37] Strabo, lib. i. p. 106. In another place he says, Magnetus was utterly destroyed by the Treres, a Kimmerian nation, lib. xiv. p. 958.

Digitized by Google

passages[38]; and with equal clearness and decision by Diodorus[39], and is implied by Plutarch.[40]

As the Kimmerians traversed the north of Europe, from east to west, the Kelts seem to have proceeded more to the south and south-west. Some geographers, before Plutarch, extended the country of the Kelts as far as the sea of Azoph.[41] Ephorus was probably one of these; for he is not only mentioned to have made Keltica of vast magnitude, and including much of Spain[42]; but he likewise divided the world into four parts, and made the Kelts to inhabit one of the four towards the west.[43] This statement leads us to infer, that the Kelts had been considered to be an extensive people[44]; which indeed the various notices about them, scattered in the writings of the ancients, sufficiently testify. All the classical authors, who mention the Kelts, exhibit them as seated in the western regions of Europe. While the Kimmerians pervaded Europe from its eastern extremity to its farthest peninsula in the north-west, their Keltic branch spread down to the south-western coasts.

[38] Appian in Illyr. p. 1196., and de Bell. Civ. lib. i. p. 625.

[39] Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 309.

[40] Plut. in Mario.

[41] Plut. in Mario.

[42] Strabo, lib. iv. p. 304.

[43] Strabo, lib. i. p. 59. Ephorus, in his fourth book, which was entitled Europe, Strabo, p. 468., divided the world into four parts, ibid. p. 59.: in the East he placed the Indians; in the South, the Ethiopians; in the West, the Keltæ; and in the North, the Scythians.

[44] Ephorus was a disciple of Isocrates, who desired him to write a history, (Photius, 1455,) which he composed from the return of the Heraclidæ into the Peloponnesus to the twentieth year of Philip of Macedon. It obtained him a distinguished reputation. His geography is often mentioned, and sometimes criticised by Strabo. But he is extolled for his knowledge by Polybius, Diodorus, and Dionysius Halicarnassus.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

When their most ancient transactions are mentioned by the Greek and Roman writers, we find them placed in France, and Spain, and emerging into Italy.

The Kelts in the West of Europe.

In the time of Herodotus, the Kelts were on the western coasts of Europe. He says, that they inhabited the remotest parts of Europe to the west[45]; and in another part, he states them to live beyond the pillars of Hercules, and about Pyrene; and he places among them the origin of the Danube.[46]

Aristotle frequently mentions the Kelts. In one place, he notices them as neither dreading earthquakes, nor inundations[47]; in another, as rushing armed into the waves[48]; and in another, as plunging their new-born infants in cold water, or clothing them in scanty garments.[49] In other works attributed to him, he speaks of the British island as lying above the Kelts[50]: he mentions Pyrene as a mountain towards the west in Keltica, from which the Danube and the Tartessus flow; the latter north of the columns of Hercules; the former passing through Europe into the Euxine.[51] He elsewhere speaks of Keltica, and the Iberians.[52] He places the Kelts above Iberia; and remarks,

[45] Herod. Melpom. c. 49.

[46] Herod. Euterpe. c. 33. So Arrian. Herodotus places a people, whom he calls Cunesioi, beyond the Kelts.

[47] Arist. ηθικων Νικομ. lib. iii. c. 10.

[48] Arist. ηθικ. Ευδημ. lib. iii. c. 1.

[49] Arist. Πολιτ. lib. vii. c. 17.

[50] De Mundo, c. iii. p. 552.

[51] Meteor. lib. i. c. 12. This passage makes it probable, that by Pyrene the ancients meant the Pyrenees, though Herodotus calls it a city, and places it inaccurately as to the sources of the Danube.

[52] De Mirab. Auscult. 1157. de Gen. An. lib. ii. c. 8. Strabo also calls their country Keltica, and Livy, Kelticum. Timagetes placed the springs of the Danube in the Keltic mountains. Schol. Appoll.

Digitized by Google

that their country was too cold for the ass, which our present experience contradicts; or, perhaps, we should rather say, that the temperature of France has been softened, by the demolition of its forests, the disappearance of its marshes, and the cultivation of its soil. Hipparchus also mentioned Keltica, but seems to have extended it into the arctic circle; for he placed Keltæ at the distance of six thousand stadia from Marseilles; and said that the sun shone all night in Keltica during the summer, and was not raised above the horizon more than nine cubits in winter.[53]

The opinions may be fanciful, but they show this great astronomer's notion of the extent of the Keltic population. The Boii who named Bohemia, and the Helvetians, are both admitted to be Keltic.[54]

The tendency of the notices of the Kelts, by Herodotus, Aristotle, and Ephorus, is to show, that in their times, this people lived in the western parts of Europe, about Gaul and Spain. They are spoken of as being in the same places by later writers.[55] But the evidence of Cæsar is particularly interesting on this subject. In his time the German or Scythic hordes had spread themselves over Europe, and had incorporated, or driven be-

[53] Strabo cites Hipparchus, p. 128.; but adds his own belief, that the Britons were more north than Keltica, by fifteen hundred stadia. In the time of Strabo the Keltæ were not more north than France. Hipparchus lived one hundred and fifty years before Strabo, and Keltica had become much limited when the Roman wrote, by the successful progress to the Rhine of the German nations. The Belgæ had then passed this river, and even entered Gaul.

[54] See Tac. Mor. Germ. — Strabo, lib. vii. — Cæsar. de Bell. Gall.

[55] As Pausanias, p. 62. Diod. Sic. p. 308.; and Strabo in many places; also by Livy.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

fore them, the more ancient races, whom we have been describing. But he found the Kelts possessing, at the period of his entrance into Gaul, the most considerable, and the best maritime part of it. He mentions that the Seine and the Marne separated them from the Belgæ, and the Garonne from the Aquitani.[56] But if the Kelts occupied the sea-coast of France, from the Seine to the Garonne, and had been driven to the Seine by the invasions of northern assailants, they were in a position extremely favourable for passing over into Britain, and had been under the same circumstances to impel them to it, which afterwards drove the Britons to seek refuge on a part of their coast, when the Saxons pressed upon them.

The Kelts had certainly been much spread upon the Continent, in the times anterior to Cæsar, and had shaken both Greece and Rome by perilous invasions. From the earliest of their predatory migrations which has been recorded by the classical writers, we find, that they were in the occupation of France about 600 years before the Christian æra. At that period, their population in this country was so abundant, that their chiefs recommended two of their princes to lead a numerous body over the Alps into Italy. One large multitude passed them near Turin, defeated the Etrurians or Tuscans, and founded Milan; another party settled about Brixia and Verona, while succeeding adventurers spread themselves over other districts. The reign of Tarquinius Priscus at Rome marks the chronology of these expeditions.[57]

[56] Cæsar. Comment. de Bell. Gall. lib. i. c. 1.

[57] We derive our information of this important chronology and event from Livy. He states, that when Tarquinius Priscus reigned,

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

THE next great movement of the Kelts, in the Italian States, that has been transmitted to us, occurred about 180 years after the preceding migration, when Brennus led them to that attack upon Rome itself, in which they became masters of the city, killed its senate, and had nearly taken its capitol, when Camillus rescued the perishing republic from its barbaric conquerors.[58]

ONE hundred and ten years afterwards, Greece suffered from the irruptions of this prolific people, under another Brennus.[59] The Kelts burst from Illyria, into Macedonia and Thrace, poured thence into Thessaly, passed the strait of Thermopylæ, as Xerxes had done, and proceeded to attack Delphos, when they were affected and destroyed by that panic which the reputation of the place, and the contrivances of its priesthood produced, and which preserved Greece from their further desolations.[60] These events occurred about 280 years before our Saviour's birth. The Kelts are noticed

the chief sovereignty of the Keltæ was with the Bituriges, (the inhabitants of that part of France where Bourges is now situated,) and that these gave a king to Kelticum. His name at that time was Ambigatus. The princes whom he sent out at the head of these expeditions were Bellovesus and Sigovesus, his sister's sons. The party under Sigovesus took the direction of the Hercynian forest. But Bellovesus commanded the invasion of Italy. Livy, Hist. lib. v. c. 34. The elder Tarquin died 578 years before the Christian æra.

[58] Dionysius Halic. dates this Keltic irruption, εφοδος κελτων, in the first year of the ninety-eighth Olympiad, or 120 years after Junius Brutus and Collatinus. Lib. i. p. 60.

[59] That the leader of the Keltæ in the attack of Rome, and their chief a century after in their invasion of Greece, should both be named Brennus, induces one to believe that this word is rather a descriptive than a personal appellation, and therefore to recollect that Brennin means a king in the Welsh and ancient British language.

[60] The fullest account of this expedition of the Kelts into Greece occurs in Pausanias, Attic. lib. i. p. 6—8., and Phoc. lib. x. p. 643—655.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

afterwards as attempting Asia Minor, and as serving in the armies of Ptolemy and also of Antigonus[61], and they had frequent battles with the Romans, but usually experienced ruinous defeats[62]; especially in that tremendous conflict with Quintus Fabius Maximus, of which Cæsar reminded the Gauls of his day[63], when they were about to war with him, and in which Strabo states that two hundred thousand Keltæ were cut off.[64]

Strabo remarks of the Keltæ, that it was common to them and the Iberians to lie on the ground[65]; that they used waxen vessels[66]; that they were addicted to human sacrifices, from which the Romans reclaimed them[67]; and that they were accustomed to bring home the heads of their enemies and fix them on the gates of their towns.[68] That the Keltæ, or Gauls, were easier conquered than the Spaniards, he ascribes to their fighting more in masses.[69] In the time of Alexander, there were Kelts on the Adriatic who offered him their friendship with language which he thought arrogant.[70] The expeditions and positions above no-

[61] Pausan. lib. i. p. 23.

[62] Liv. Hist.

[63] Cæsar de Bell. Gall.

[64] Strabo places the scene of this battle where the Isar and the Rhone flow, near the Kemminon mountains. The conqueror erected a trophy of white stone, and built two temples, one to Mars, and one to Hercules, p. 283.

[65] Strabo, p. 249. [66] Ib. p. 233.

[67] Ib. p. 303.

[68] He says, that Posidonius declares he saw several of their heads, p. 303.; a custom which Strabo thought barbarian; but which reminds us of our own legal practice with executed traitors.

[69] Ib. p. 299.

[70] Strabo, lib. vii. p. 462. Arrian, lib. i. p. 8. The account, related on the authority of Ptolemy Lagus, his general, and king of Egypt, is, that the king received the ambassadors with great civility, and asked them at his banquet what they most dreaded, expecting a

Digitized by Google

ticed of the Kelts, prove that they were in the habit of spreading themselves from France into other countries; and considering the spirit of enterprise, the abundant population, and power of the Keltæ in France and the vicinity and fertility of Britain, we cannot avoid believing, that they crossed the sea to colonise it. Cæsar expressly mentions, that one of the Keltic kings in Gaul, Divitiacus, who governed there the Suessiones, and was the most powerful prince in that country, had subjected also part of Britain to his power.[71] From him also we learn, that the Kelts of Armorica called upon some of the British tribes to aid them against his hostilities[72]; and one of his reasons for attacking Britain was that it had assisted the Keltic Gauls to resist him.[73] He speaks also of its being visited by the Keltic merchants; and before his invasion of Britain, he sent one of the Keltic princes of Gaul, whom he had made a king, into our island to persuade the Britons to be friendly to the Roman state, because the authority of this chieftain was great in Britain. Thus Cæsar affords sufficient evidence of the military and commercial intercourse between the two nations in his time; a fact favourable to the opinion of the affinity between some parts of their respective populations.

The Kelts enter Britain.

THAT colonies of Keltic race entered the British islands from Gaul, has always appeared to our antiquaries so probable, that there is scarcely any circumstance on which they have so cordially agreed.

complimentary answer as to himself. But they said they feared nothing, unless that the sky should fall and overwhelm them, though they highly valued his friendship. Alexander admitted them to his alliance, but called them arrogant.

[71] Lib. ii. c. 4. [72] Lib. iii. c. 9. [73] C. 18.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

The Welsh tradition may be therefore read without incredulity, which deduces two colonies from Gaul, not Kymry or Kimmerians, but of Kimmerian origin; the one from Armorica, and the other from Gascony.[74] The distinction taken as to their origin suits the situation of the Kelts, who, to use the expression of the triad, were of the first race of the Kymry. The Armorican emigration was of the tribe called Brython[75], a name which recals to our recollection, that Pliny found a people called Britanni remaining in Gaul in his time.[76] The colony from Gascony was the Lloegrwys, whose name became attached to that part of the island which they occupied; for the largest part of England has been always named Lloegr by the Welsh poets[77] and chroniclers.[78] Tacitus expresses

[74] The fifth triad is this: "The three peaceful people of the isle of Britain. The first were the nation of the Kymry, who came with Hu Cadarn to the island of Britain. He obtained not the country, nor the lands, by slaughter or contest, but with justice and peace. The other was the race of the Lloegrwys, who came from the land of Gwasgwyn; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. The third were the Brython, and from the land of Llydaw they came; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. And these were called the three peaceful nations, because they came one to the other with peace and tranquillity; and these three nations were of the first race of the Kymry, and they were of the same language." Trioedd ynys Prydain. Archaiol. p.58.

[75] The Brython are frequently mentioned by the old Welsh poets: by Aneurin, in his Gododin, 1 Archaiol. p. 10., and by Taliessin, p. 31. 50. 66, 67. 73. He once mentions the Morini Brython, in his Prif Gyfarch, or Primary Gratulation, p. 33.

[76] Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. iv. c. 31.; and Dionysius.

[77] Aneurin speaks of Lloegr, p. 7., and calls its inhabitants Lloegrwys, p. 4. 9. and 11. Taliessin has Lloegr, p. 64. and 59., and Lloergrwys, p. 51. 55. Llywarch Hen and Myrddhin also use both words, as 108. 117. 153., &c.

[78] Besides the fabulous Brut Tysilio, and the Brut ab Arthur, 2 Archaiol. p. 116, 117., their historical chronicles Brut y Saeson, and the Brut y Tywysogion, p. 469, 471., &c. speak of England under this name.

Digitized by Google

his belief, that the Gauls peopled Britain[79], and Bede derives its inhabitants from Armorica.[80] The position of the Kelts on the maritime regions of the west of Europe, bringing them more within the reach of intercourse with the civilised nations of antiquity, who frequented the ocean, they had begun to feel the influence of the superior progress of the improved part of the world. The Grecian settlement of the Phocians, at Marseilles, about 540 years before the Christian æra, flourished afterwards into great wealth and consequence. These colonists subdued some of the Keltic regions around them, founded cities, built a splendid temple to the Ephesian Diana, raised large fleets, pursued extensive navigations, of which the voyage of Pytheas towards Iceland is an instance; and became distinguished for the elegance of their manners, their love of literature, and spirit of philosophy. They made their city so attractive for its intellectual resources, that some of the noblest of the Romans lived at Marseilles, in preference to Athens; and they diffused such a taste for Grecian customs around them, that the Gauls used Greek

[79] Tacitus Vit. Agric. In Camden's Britannia numerous analogies of manners and language between the Britons and Gauls are collected, to prove their identity of origin. Some of these are worth our consideration.

[80] Bede Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. i. We have two collateral proofs from the analogy of language of the affinity between the inhabitants of Britain and the ancient Kelts. Pausanias, mentioning that every Keltic horseman was followed to battle by two attendants, says that the Kelts called this custom, in their native language, Trimarkisian, because the name of a horse among the Kelts is *Markan*, Phoc. lib. x. p. 545. *Mark* is also a horse, *tri* is three, and *trimarkwys* is literally three horsemen, in the ancient British, and present Welsh. Cæsar states, that the Keltic people, who bordered upon the ocean, were in his time called Armoricæ, lib. v. c. 44. In the ancient British, and in the Welsh, ar-mor-uch literally mean upon the sea-heights.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

letters, and wrote their contracts in Greek.[81] The Keltic invaders of Greece must have also introduced many beneficial improvements into their native country; for Strabo mentions, that treasures taken from Delphi, in the expedition under Brennus, were found by the Romans at Tholouse.[82] It was remarked by Ephorus, that the Keltæ were fond of the Greeks[83]; and their diffusion into Spain, which he also notices[84], brought them into immediate contact with the Phenicians and Carthaginians; and their Druids are certainly evidence that a part of the population had made some intellectual advance. The preceding facts, connected with the analogy of the language, as at first remarked, satisfactorily prove that our earliest population came from the Kimmerian and Keltic stock.

[81] Strabo, p. 272, 273. Justin. L. 43. c. 3.
[82] Strabo, p. 286. [83] Ib. p. 304.
[84] Ephorus stated, that they occupied the largest part of Spain, up to Cadiz. Strabo, p. 304. And Strabo mentions, that before the Carthaginians possessed Spain, the Keltoi and the Tyrians held it, p. 238.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Phenicians and Carthaginians in Britain.

CHAP. III.

Phenicians in Spain and Britain.

But though the Kimmerii, and their kindred the Kelts, may have peopled Britain, a more celebrated people are also stated to have visited it. The Phenicians, in their extensive commercial navigations, colonized many of the islands, and some of the coasts of the Ægean and Mediterranean Seas. Inscriptions in their language have been found in Malta. They occupied Spain, and founded Cadiz; and it was probably in pursuit of them, that Nebuchadnezzar, the celebrated King of Babylon, became the conqueror of Spain. They had also an established intercourse with islands, which the Greeks called "the Islands of Tin," or Cassiterides. This, being a descriptive name, was probably the translation of the Phenician appellation.[1] As Herodotus intimates, that the Cassiterides were, with respect to Greece, in the farthest parts of Europe[2]; as Aristotle talks of *Keltic* tin[3]; and Strabo describes

The Cassiterides.

[1] Κασσιτερον is the word used by the Greeks for tin. Bochart has founded an ingenious etymology of the "Britannic islands" on the Hebrew ברית־אנך, Baratanac, which, he says, means the Land of Tin. He says Strabo calls Britain, Βρεττανικη. Boch. Canaan, lib. i. c. 39. p. 720. He also intimates, what is more probable, that the word Κασσιτερον may have been of Phenician origin. The Chaldean Targums, of Jonathan and Jerusalem, certainly call tin *kastira* and *kistara*, as the Arabs name it *kasdar*. See Numbers, xxxi. 22.

[2] Herod. Thalia, c. 115.

[3] Aristot. lib. Mirabilium; Mela places the Cassiterides in Celticis, or among the Keltæ, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 262.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

both these islands and Britain, to be opposite to the Artabri, or Gallicia in Spain, but northward, and places them within the British climate[4]; as in another passage he states them to be as to Rome, without, or on our side of the columns of Hercules[5]; as he mentions them to be productive of tin, obviously connecting them at the same time with the British islands[6]; and in another part, as being in the open sea, north from the port of the Artabri[7], or Gallicia: the most learned, both at home and abroad, have believed the Cassiterides to have been some of the British islands. This opinion is warranted by there being no other islands famous for tin near the parts designated by Strabo; and by the fact, that British tin was so celebrated in antiquity, that Polybius intended to write on the British islands, and the preparation of tin.[8]

It has been suggested, that the Scilly islands and Cornwall were more peculiarly meant by the Cassiterides. When Cornwall was first discovered from the south of Europe, it may have been thought an island, before greater familiarity with the coast taught the navigators that it was only a projecting part of a larger country; and even then, when the whole country connected with it was found to be

[4] Strabo Geog. lib. ii. p. 181.

[5] Ib. lib. ii. p. 191. He joins them with the British islands, και Καττιτερίδες, και βρεττανικαι.

[6] Ib. lib. iii. p. 219. Here he says, than tin is produced among the barbarians above Lusitania, and in the islands Cassiterides, and from Britain is brought to Marseilles.

[7] Ib. lib. iii. p. 265. In this passage Strabo says likewise, they are ten in number, adjoining each other.

[8] Polyb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 5. Festus Avienus describes islands under the name of Æstrymnides, which are thought to be the same with Strabo's Cassiterides. He says they were frequented by the merchants of Tartessus and Carthage, and were rich in tin and lead. De oris Marit.

Digitized by Google

an island, there was no reason to change its insular appellation. In our navigations to the Pacific, new-discovered places have been at first marked as islands, which were afterwards traced to be parts of a continent; and others have been deemed continental, which have been discovered to be insular![9]

Much of the false description with which the position of the Cassiterides has been confused, may have been designedly circulated by the Phenicians themselves. We know from Strabo, that they were anxious to deprive the rest of the world of any acquaintance with these islands. He has told us a very striking incident of this monopolizing solicitude, which must have been the parent of many misrepresentations about Britain, till the Romans subdued and examined it. He says, "Anciently the Phenicians alone, from Cadiz, engrossed this market; hiding the navigation from all others. When the Romans followed the course of a vessel, that they might discover the situation, the jealous pilot wilfully stranded his ship; misleading those, who were tracing him, to the same destruction. Escaping from the shipwreck, he was indemnified for his losses out of the public treasury."[10] When Cæsar invaded Britain, we know from his Commentaries, that he was unacquainted with its magnitude, its harbours, or its people. It was even

[9] The reasons for supposing the Cassiterides to be the Scilly islands are thus stated in Camden's Britannia. They are opposite to the Artabri in Spain; they bend directly to the north from them; they lie in the same clime with Britain; they look towards Celtiberia; the sea is much broader between them and Spain, than between them and Britain; they lie just upon the Iberian sea; there are only ten of them of any note, and they have veins of tin which no other isle has in this tract. Camd. Brit. p. 1112. Ed. 1695. All these circumstances have been mentioned of the Cassiterides.

[10] Strabo, lib. iii. p. 265.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

doubted whether it was a continent or an island.[11] Of course the Romans at that time could have known nothing of the connection and continuance of coast between Cornwall and Dover. This ignorance of other nations, and the designed misinformation given by the Phenicians, may have occasioned the distinction to have been taken between the Cassiterides and Britain, and a supposition, favoured by Strabo, that some sea intervened.[12] The Cassiterides had become imperfectly known to the Romans, in the time of Strabo, by the attempt of [13] Publius Crassus to discover them. He seems to have landed at one of them; but the short account given of his voyage does not incline us to believe that he completely explored them.[14]

If we once presume that the Phenicians reached the Scilly islands, and extracted tin from them, we shall do great injustice to their memory to suppose

[11] Dio Cass. lib. xxxix. p. 127. Cæsar. Comm. de Bell. Gall. lib. iv. s. 18.

[12] Solinus says, that a turbid sea divided the Scilly isle (Siluram) from Britain, Polyhist. c. 22. p. 31. The distance is near forty miles. Whit. Manch. ii. p. 172. 8°.

[13] Strabo, lib. iii. p. 265. Huet thinks this was not the Crassus who perished against the Parthians, though he had fought in Portugal and triumphed in Spain; but his son, who was Cæsar's lieutenant in his Gallic wars, and who subdued the people of Vannes and its vicinity. He may have undertaken the voyage from curiosity, as Volusenus, by Cæsar's orders, examined part of the sea coasts of our island for military purposes. Hist. de Com. des Anciens, c. 38. p. 183. ed. Par. 1727.

[14] Whittaker's description of the present state of the Scilly islands is worth reading. Hist. Manch. ii. p. 169. Though the same chapter in other parts discovers a fancy painting far beyond the facts in its authorities. A writer in the Metropolitan Magazine, Jan. 1832, states the Scilly isles to be mere rocks, and that the currents make the navigation between them and the main land at all times dangerous. He adds, "We are of opinion that the present St. Michael's Mount is meant. At ebb tide it is accessible from the main. Tin is found there in two ways, in streamlets and mines."

Digitized by Google

that they, who could sail from Tyre to the Scilly islands, would not have adventured across the small sea between them and the Land's End. Indeed, the voyage of Himilco shows that the Carthaginians, the offspring of Tyre, pursued voyages even more northward than Britain.[15] We may therefore admit, without much chance of error, that the Cassiterides visited by the Phenicians were the British islands, though the Romans understood by the name the Islands of Scilly, with perhaps part of the coast of Cornwall.[16]

Welsh traditions.

HAVING thus stated the most authentic circumstances that can be now collected, of the peopling of Britain by the Kimmerians, the Keltoi, and the Phenicians; it may not be improper to state, in one view, all that the Welsh traditions deliver of the ancient inhabitants of the island. As traditions of an ancient people committed to writing, they deserve to be preserved from absolute oblivion.

ACCORDING to the Welsh triads, while it was uninhabited by human colonies, and was full of bears, wolves, beavers, and a peculiar kind of wild cattle, it had the name of Clas Merddhin.[17] In this state, Hy Cadarn led the first colony of the Cymry to it, of whom some went to Bretagne.[18] It then acquired the name of the Honey Island.[19] In the course of time, Prydain, the son of Aedd the Great, reigned in it, and from him it was called Ynys Prydain, the Isle of Prydain[20]; which is its present

[15] Pliny, lib. ii. c. 67.

[16] Pliny has preserved the name of the Phenician navigator who first procured lead from the Cassiterides. He says, Plumbum ex Cassiteride insula primus apportavit *Midacritus*. Hist. Nat. lib. vii. c. 57.

[17] Trioedd 1. [18] Ib. 4. and 5. [19] Ib. i.

[20] Trioedd 1. Isidorus says, that Britain derived its name from a word of its inhabitants.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

denomination in Welsh, and which the Greeks and Romans may have extended into Britannia. It was afterwards visited by two foreign tribes of Kimmerian origin, the Lloegrwys, from Gwasgwyn, or Gascony; and the Brython, from Llydaw, or Bretagne.[21] Both of these were peaceable colonists. The Lloegrwys impressed their name upon a large portion of the island. At subsequent periods, other people came with more or less violence. The Romans[22]; the Gwyddyl Fficti (the Picts) to Alban or Scotland, on the part which lies nearest to the Baltic[23]; the Celyddon (Caledonians) to the north parts of the island; the Gwyddyl to other parts of Scotland[24]; the Corraniaid from Pwyll (perhaps Poland) to the Humber[25]; the men of Galedin, or Flanders, to Wyth; the Saxons[26]; and the Llychlynians, or Northmen.[27]

Carthaginians acquainted with Britain.

As the prosperity of the Phenicians declined under the hostilities of the ancient conquerors, who emerged from Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, their descendants, the Carthaginians, succeeded to the possession of their European settlements; and in some places, as in Spain, and Scilly, greatly extended their territorial power. The Carthaginian occupation of Spain is fully attested to us by the Roman historians, and was distinguished by the wars in that country of the celebrated Carthaginian generals, Asdrubal and Hannibal. It was natural that when possessed of Spain, they should also acquire the more distant colonies of the Phenicians, and continue their commercial intercourse with the British islands, and the neighbouring shores. Hence, there is no reason to disbelieve the opinion,

[21] Trioedd. 5. [22] Ib. 8. [23] Ib. 7. [24] Ib. 6. [25] Ib. 7. [26] Ib. 6. [27] Ib. 8.

Digitized by Google

that the Carthaginians had the same intercourse with the British islands which the Phenicians established. The voyage of Himilco warrants the supposition. This Carthaginian officer sailed from Spain, on a voyage of discovery of the northern coasts of Europe, at the same time that Hanno was directed to circumnavigate Africa.[28]

[28] Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67. On Bochart's derivation of Brettanike from Baratanac, the Land of Tin, mentioned in note 1 of this chapter, p. 51., it may be remarked, that these terms are rather conjectural as to the Hebrew: though *barat*, as he intimates, signifies a field in Syriac, and is twice used in that sense in the Chaldee of Daniel. But I have since found the two component words actually existing in the Arabic tongue, and placed as such in the Arabic Lexicon; for there I find '*bahrat*' to mean 'a country' and '*anuk*' to signify 'tin and lead.' So that in Arabic *bahrat-anuk* literally express 'the Country of Tin,' which is the meaning of the Greek Kassiterides: and it is not more improbable that England should have been anciently called by its trading visitors, the 'Tin Country,' than that Molucca and the adjacent isles should be termed by our navigators 'the Spice Islands,' or that a part of Africa should be entitled, 'the Gold Coast,' and another part 'the Slave Coast;' seamen and merchants not unnaturally naming the distant land from the article for which they frequent it.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

On the knowledge which the Greeks had of the British Islands.—And on the Tradition of the Trojan Colony.

BOOK I.

THE Grecian knowledge of Europe was gradually obtained. The calamities experienced at sea, by the conquerors of Troy on their return, dispersed them into many parts of the maritime regions of Europe.[1] The subsequent settlements of several Grecian colonies in Italy, as well as that already noticed at Marseilles, from which they pursued distant navigations; and the visits of Grecian travellers and philosophers to the Phenician cities in Spain[2], led them to some knowledge of its western and northern seas, shores, and islands. The attack of Darius, the Persian king, on the Scythians in Europe, revealed more knowledge of these people than former ages had acquired[3]; and the expeditions of Alexander, before his eastern adventure, disclosed to the Greeks all the north of Europe, up to the Danube. In the same manner, the restless enterprises of Mithridates made known to both Greeks and Romans the various tribes that inhabited the sea of Azoph and its vicinity.[4]

[1] Strabo, p. 223. 236. Plutarch in Nic. p. 238.

[2] Of which we have an instance in Posidonius. See Strabo, 264.

[3] Herodotus.

[4] Strabo, p. 26. Several of the Greeks wrote on the ancient geography of Europe, whose works we have lost, as Dicæarchus, Messenius, Eratosthenes, and Posidonius, whom Strabo mentions, p. 163., and whom he seems too fond of censuring, which is one of

Digitized by Google

Hence the Grecians had much information of the ancient chorography of Europe, though they were unacquainted, as Polybius intimates, with many of its inland regions.[5]

Britain known to the Greeks.

But that Britain and Ireland were known to the Greeks, at least by name, is an unquestionable fact. The ancient Argonautica, ascribed to Orpheus, but of much later origin[6], describes the voyage of the Argonauts, on their return to Greece. In this curious work, they are made to sail round the north of Europe, from the Kimmerian Bosphorus. In coming southward, the author says, "they passed by the island Iernida."[7] Whether the next island they noticed, which is described as full of pine-trees, was any part of Britain, cannot be ascertained. As this work, if not written in the time of Pisistratus, which many assert it to have been, is at least of great antiquity[8]; it is an evidence that Ireland was known to the ancient Greeks.

the faults of Strabo. It was a favourite point with him to attack all former geographers. He comes within the remark of "bearing no brother near the throne."

[5] Polybius, lib. iii. remarks this of the tract between Narbonne and the Tanais.

[6] Suidas says, the Argonautica was written by an Orpheus of Crotona, whom Asclepiades, in the sixth book of his Grammaticæ, declared to be the friend of Pisistratus, vol. ii. p. 339. Some other works, published under the name of Orpheus, he attributes to Onomacritus, ib. 338.

[7] Αργοναυτικα, ν 1179. p. 156. ed. Lips. 1764. Strabo, lib. iv. p. 307., calls Ireland Ιερνη, and Diodorus Siculus gives it a name that approaches very near its native appellation. Its name in the Gaelic is Erin; in Diodorus it is Ιριν, lib. v. p. 309.

[8] The antiquity of the Αργοναυτικα has been ably vindicated by D. Ruhnkenius. He shows that it was quoted by two ancient grammarians, Orus and Draco Stratonicensis. He gives his own critical judgment of its antiquity in strong terms; "Is, qui Argonautica et Hymnos Orpheo subjecit, sive Onomacritus fuerit, ut plures traducit, sive alius, scriptor certe meo judicio *Vetustissimus* est; in quo quamvis

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

In the book de Mundo, which is ascribed to Aristotle, the British islands are mentioned, with their specific names, Albion and Ierne.

The voyage of Pytheas, which was in existence in the fifth century[9], must have transmitted much information to the Greeks concerning our islands. He seems to have lived about the time of Aristotle.[10] He sailed from Marseilles, where he made an observation to determine its latitude, which enabled Eratosthenes and Hipparchus to calculate it with a precision which modern astronomers have found exact.[11] He coasted Spain, Portugal, and France, into the British Channel. He passed along the eastern shore of Britain, to the north, till he reached the island which he has called Thule. He is the first navigator that penetrated so far into the Northern Ocean. After this, he made a voyage to the German Ocean; passed the Sound into the Baltic Sea, and sailed on to a river, which he thought the Tanais, the boundary of Europe.[12] In all his course, he made many observations on the climate, the people, and the productions of the

animum diligenter attenderim ne levissimum quidem recentioris ætatis vestigium reperi; contra, proba omnia et antiquitatem redolentia." Epist. Crit. 2. p. 128. ed. 1782.

[9] He is quoted by Stephanius, Voc. ωστιωνες, who lived at this period.

[10] See M. Bougainville's very able Memoir on his Life and Voyages, Mem. Ac. des Inscript. v. xxx. p. 285.

[11] Bougainville, p. 289. Pytheas referred the cause of the tides to the agency of the moon. Plut. de placit. Phil. His description of the stars in the north was cited with approbation by Hipparchus, in his Commentary on Aratus.

[12] Bougainville has collected the passages from Pytheas' Voyage, in Strabo and Pliny, which express these circumstances; and has vindicated him from the angry invectives of Strabo, who, though occasionally erring himself, is very unsparing in his censure of Pytheas.

Digitized by Google

countries he visited, of which only a very few fragments have descended to us; and it is evident, from what has been transmitted to us of his opinions, that Britain was a principal object of his examination. [13]

In the third book of his history, Polybius has intimated that the British islands, and the manner of making tin, would be one of his subjects for a future composition. [14] His friend, the great Scipio, made enquiries concerning Britain [15], of the merchants of Narbonne and Marseilles; but though he could obtain, from their ignorance or their jealousy, nothing worthy of memory, yet, as Polybius mentions that many authors before him had treated fully, though variously, on this and the other subjects which he postpones; and as he himself had travelled through Spain and Gaul, and had sailed over the ocean which bounds them [16]; the remarks of an author, so inquisitive and judicious, would have been an invaluable present to our curiosity. If they were ever written [17], time has deprived us of them. We have equally lost the works of Timæus, Isidorus, Artemidorus, Messenius, Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, and Posidonius,

[13] See Pliny, lib. ii. c. 77. & c. 99.; lib. iv. c. 27. & c. 30.; and Strabo, p. 163. & 175. Pytheas has had a singular fortune: he has been attacked by Strabo and Polybius, and followed by Eratosthenes and Hipparchus.

[14] Hist. lib. iii. c. 5.

[15] Strabo, lib. iv. p. 289.

[16] Polybius, lib. iii. c. 5.

[17] In speaking of the British islands, Polybius rather expresses a treatise which he had it in his contemplation to compose, than one which he had made. From this passage, it is not certain, whether he fulfilled his intentions; and yet some allusions of Strabo seem to have been taken from such a work.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

who are all mentioned to have noticed the British islands.[18]

INDEED it is evident that the Grecian geographers directed their attention to the northern and western parts of Europe. Cæsar mentions, that the great Hercynian forest of Germany was known to Eratosthenes, and some other Grecians, who called it Orcynia.[19] But that Grecian colonies were in Britain, cannot be believed on the vague intimation of St. Jerome.[20] That Hiero, king of Sicily, had the main-mast of his ship from England, rests on a passage in Atheneus[21], which has been thought corrupted; because a sentence of Polybius, if it had not been corrected, would have made Hannibal to have fought in Britain.[22] Later Greek stories are mere random fictions.[23] But that Bri-

[18] Pliny, lib. iv. c. 30. Strabo, lib. ii. p. 163.; lib. iv. p. 304.; lib. i. p. 111. We find from Tacitus, Vit. Agr., that Livy and Fabius Rusticus, "Eloquentissimi auctores," had also treated of Britain before him.

[19] Cæsar, lib. vi. c. 22.

[20] St. Jerome, in his questions on Genesis referring to Varro Sisinius Capito and Phlegon, but without giving their precise words, says, that the Greeks possessed all the sea coasts from the mountains Amanus and Taurus to the British Ocean. But these writers may have meant no more than the Grecian colony at Marseilles.

[21] Athenæus describes at length the celebrated ship which Archimedes made for Hiero, because he had just read very carefully the book which Moschion had written upon it. After giving a full detail of its various parts, he comes to its masts. He says, the second and third were easily found, but the first was obtained with difficulty. It was found by a herdsman, εν τοις ορεσιν της Βρεττανιας, and Phileas the Tauromenian, the mechanist, brought it down to the sea. Deip. lib. v. p. 208. Camden suggests that this may be a corruption for Βρεττιανης, or the Brutii in Italy.

[22] The corrupt passage of Polybius occurs in the eclogue of the 11th book. The corruption here is manifest, as Camden has remarked. The passage applies wholly to Italy.

[23] There have been some absurd fancies about the earlier intercourse of the Greeks and Romans with Britain. That Alexander the

Digitized by Google

tain was at least in the recollection of the Romans before Cæsar, is obvious from the passage of Lucretius which alludes to it.[24] The remarks of Dion Cassius and of Diodorus, express the real state of the question as to the actual intercourse of the Grecians and Romans with Britain.[25]

It is well known that Jeffrey of Monmouth, who diffused in the twelfth century that history of Britain which in former times so much occupied the public mind, deduces the first colonization of Britain from a Trojan source; from Brutus, the son of Æneas, who, after wandering through the sea, and landing in Gaul, finally settled in this island. The same story is in the Welsh Chronicles, which are ascribed to Tyssilio, and supposed, though too gratuitously, to have been Jeffrey's originals.

Not a line of history can be written from a work so obviously fabulous as the composition, or, as he describes it, the translation from Breton manuscripts, of Jeffrey. But the curious student may

Great came from Cadiz to Britain, or that British kings made presents to Cato the Elder, in approbation of his virtue, as Cedrenus and J. Tzetzes mention, are circumstances which show that the introduction of romance into history did not originate merely from our minstrels.

[24] "Nam quid Britannium cœlum differre putamus
Et quod in Ægypto est, qua mundi claudicat axis." Luc.

[25] Dion says, "Its existence was not known to the earliest Greeks and Romans, and to the more recent it was a doubt whether it was a continent or an island. But though several maintained each opinion, they had no actual knowledge about it, as they neither saw the island themselves nor conversed with its natives," lib. xxxix. p. 127. Diodorus remarks, "Anciently it remained untouched by foreign powers; for we have not heard that either Bacchus or Hercules, or any of the other heroes, reigned in it," lib. iv. p. 300. Mela's opinion is, that Cæsar subdued in it tribes, not only unconquered before, but even unknown, lib. iii. p. 268.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

fairly ask, did this Trojan story originate with Jeffrey, or had it an earlier origin? A few observations will be sufficient on the subject.

It appears from Nennius, who wrote in the ninth century, that the opinion of this descent was in Britain in his time; for he mentions an outline of that story[26], which Jeffrey has so much amplified and dramatised.

Taliesin, in his poems, frequently mentions Troy, and seems to allude to the tradition of such a descent.[27] All this is too vague for history. But it is remarkable, that there should have been in Europe several traditions connected both with the conquerors and the conquered, in that celebrated warfare which Homer has immortalized.[28]

It was the ambition of Cæsar, who delighted to accomplish what no man before him had achieved, that led him, after the conquest of the Keltic nation in Gaul, and its German invaders, to attempt the discovery and subjugation of Britain. He knew

[26] Nennius professes to derive his account from the annals of the Romans. It is briefly this: Brutus was the grandson of Ascanius, the son of Eneas. Driven from Italy and the Tyrrhenian Sea, he went to Gaul, and founded Tours, and thence came to this island, gave it his name, and peopled it about the time that Eli was the judge in Israel, c. 33.

[27] See Welsh Archaiology, vol. i.

[28] Thus Tacitus mentions the opinion of the Germans, that Ulysses was driven into the Northern Ocean, and built there Asciburgum; and that an altar dedicated to Ulysses, with the name of Laertes his father, had been found there, De Mor. Germ. s. 3. Solinus notices a tradition of Ulysses having reached a bay in Caledonia; "which," he adds, "an altar with a Greek inscription shows," c. 22. A Trojan colony is stated to have founded Trapano in Italy, Dion. Hal. p. 41, 42. Virgil intimates, Æn. l. 1. v. 242., that Antenor founded Padua, and led his Trojan followers into Illyria and Liburnia, and to the springs of the Timavus, or into Sclavonia, Croatia, and Frioul. — Pliny, l. 3. c. 2. stations Dardani in Mœsia, which he extends from the Pontus to the

Digitized by Google

not whether it was a vast continent or a confined island. But the doubt and obscurity were but additional temptations to his aspiring genius. To great minds, the unknown is as attractive as the wonderful; and untried danger is but a mysterious incentive to explore it. He prepared a small fleet to examine its coasts; and resolved with the force which he could then venture to take from Gaul, to attempt to penetrate a country, which none of the conquerors of the civilised world appear to have even seen.

Danube, and Strabo, l. 7. enumerates the Dardanidæ among the Illyrians; while Pindar ascribes the settlement of Cyrene in Africa also to Antenor. Pyth. Od. 5. Another tradition connects Ulysses with Lisbon. Livy describes the same Trojan chief as likewise founding the Venetian population. Hist. l. 1. But the tradition more immediately connecting itself with the intimations of Nennius, is that noticed by Ammianus Marcellinus, that some Trojans, flying from the Greeks, and dispersed all around, occupied regions in Gaul then uninhabited, lib. xv. c. 9.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

The Memoirs of the Ancient Britons. — The Druids.

BOOK I.

WHEN Britain was invaded by the Romans, it exhibited the state of a country which had been peopled from several shoots of the barbaric or nomadic stocks, at different periods, with some grafts or improvements from more civilised nations. Its inhabitants were divided into many tribes, of which about forty-five have been enumerated with distinct appellations.[1] Of these, the Belgæ, whom Cæsar

[1] I. From Kent to Cornwall were the

Cantii	Belgæ
Regni	Durotriges
Bibroces	Hædui
Attrebates	Carnabii
Segontiaci	Damnonii.

These were afterwards comprised in the Roman district called Britannia Prima.

II. In the Peninsula of Wales were the Silures, Ordovices, and Dimetæ, whose country formed the Britannia Secunda of the Romans.

III. Between the Thames, the Severn, the Mersey, the Humber, and the ocean, the district afterwards named Flavia Cesariensis, comprised the

Trinobantes	Dobuni
Iceni	Huiccii
Coritani	Ancalites
Cassii	Carnabii.

IV. In the Maxima Cesariensis of the Romans, or in our present Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Durham, and part of Northumberland, were the

Setantii	or	Sistuntii
Volantii	or	Voluntii
Brigantes.		

V. The five nations, who occupied the districts of the Roman province of Valentia, which, comprising chief part of Northumber-

Digitized by Google

particularises to have passed over from Belgic Gaul, and to have been established in the island by their victories, occupied part of the coast of the British Channel. He distinguishes the Cantii, or people of Kent, as more advanced than the rest in the habits of civilised life, and as not differing much from the people of Gaul. The Belgæ pursued agriculture. But most of the interior tribes lived on milk and flesh, or in that state which has been called the pastoral, and clothed themselves with skins.[2]

ALL the Britons stained themselves of a blue colour with woad, which gave them a more horrible appearance in battle.[3] They wore long hair

land, extended from the Wall of Hadrian, into Scotland, as far as the Wall of Antoninus, were the

Ottadini	Novantes
Gadeni	Damnii.
Selgovæ	

VI. Beyond these, in North Britain, were the tribes included in the Roman province of Vespasiani.

Horestii	Vacomagi
Vecturones	Albani
Taixali	Attacotti.

VII. In the rest of Scotland were the

Caledoni	Mertæ
Cautæ	Carnonancæ
Logi	Cerones
Carnabii	Creones
Catini	Epidii.

[2] Cæsar. Comment. lib. v. c. 10. Herodian speaks of those in the northern districts, with whom Severus fought, as usually naked, with an iron ring round their neck or stomach, lib. iii. p. 83.

[3] Cæsar. ib. Mela, lib. iii. c. 6. This seems to have been done from infancy, as Pliny says the British wives and nurses did it, lib. xxii. c. 2. Hence Martial's epithet, "Cæruleis Britannis," lib. xi. c. 32. Herodian remarks, of the Britons who resisted Severus, that they painted the figures of all kinds of animals on their bodies, lib. iii. p. 83.; and as Claudian mentions "the fading figures on the dying Pict," it seems to have pervaded the island, and to have been continued by the less civilised to his time. Claud. de Bell. Get.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

on their heads, but shaved it from the other parts of the body excepting the upper lip. Their population appeared numerous to the Romans.[4]

THE aspect of the country, as it first struck their view, presented a succession of forests, lakes, and great rivers: and Mela remarks of it, what must have been true of most parts of Europe, where agriculture was little practised, that it was more adapted to the kindly nourishment of cattle than of men. He also represents the people in general as not only uncivilised, but as much behind the nations on the continent in their social culture. Their cattle and fields were their general wealth, and they seem to have been acquainted with no other.[5]

LIKE all barbaric tribes, who have reached their stations at successive periods, or have grown up in separate and independent states, and whose active spirits are not occupied by the pursuits of civilised life, they were perpetually at war with each other[6]; and it is probable that the present state and people of New Zealand exhibit more nearly than any other, the condition of Britain when the Romans entered it.

THE Britons were taller than the Gauls, but not

[4] Cæsar.

[5] Mela, lib. iii. c. 6. Cicero gives us the impression of his day on this subject. In a letter to Atticus he says, "It is known that there is not a scruple of money in the island; nor any hope of booty, but in slaves," lib. iv. ep. 17. It is curious to read this remark now, when Britain is the wealthiest country of Europe.

[6] Mela, ib. Herodian speaks of the Britons as "a most warlike nation, eager for slaughter," lib. iii. p. 83. As already hinted, I consider the British History of Jeffry of Monmouth a tissue of fiction, though it may have preserved some real names, traditions, and circumstances: but it is impossible to separate in it the true from the invented.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

so strong. The young Britons whom Strabo saw at Rome, were higher by half a foot than the tallest man there, but their lower limbs were not straight; nor did the general outline of their make display the symmetry of beauty. Their hair was less yellow than that of the Gauls.[7] The Silures are mentioned with ruddy cheeks and curled hair: and the inhabitants of Caledonia with red hair.[8] As the Belgæ in Gaul wore loose breeches and a waistcoat with sleeves, instead of a tunic; and a sagum or upper garment[9], we may suppose that their settlers in Britain used the same dress. Bonduca's royal costume when she addressed the Britains, was long yellow hair, with a large golden torques; and a χιτων or tunic swelling round her bosom in various colours, with a thick cloak thrown over it.[10] The Britons had gold rings on their middle finger.[11]

THEIR houses, chiefly formed of reeds or wood, were very numerous, like those of the Gauls, and were usually seated in the midst of woods, perhaps for better defence, as those of the New Zealanders are, for the same reason, placed on fortified hills. The wars of fierce and rude men, unacquainted with military discipline, or disdaining to submit to it, usually consist of attempts to surprise and

[7] Strabo, lib. iv. p. 305.

[8] Tacitus, Agric. Vit. Rutilatæ Comæ, Livy notices of the Gauls, lib. xxxviii. c. 17.

[9] Strabo, 300. [10] Xiph. epit. Dio. p. 169.

[11] Pliny, lib. xxxiii. c. 6. This author remarks that the person, who first put rings on the fingers, introduced one of the worst crimes of life, ibid. c. 4. The proximum scelus was coining money from gold, ibid. c. 13. The use of rings as a personal distinction for men has so greatly declined, that even Pliny would not have thought them to have a very wicked tendency. They are worn now but as a petty ornament, not as in his time for fastidious pomp.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

ravage; and therefore precautions against sudden aggressions are the most essential parts of their defensive skill. The Britons seem to have cleared a space in the wood, on which they built their huts and folded their cattle; and they fenced the avenues by ditches and barriers of trees. Such a collection of houses formed one of their towns.[12]

THEY had great quantities of cattle.[13] Some of the British tribes are said not to have had the art of making cheese, though they had abundance of milk; others knew nothing of either agriculture or gardening.[14] They housed their corn in the ear, in subterraneous places, and threshed out no more than served them for the day.[15] The little money which they had, was of the Spartan kind; it was either copper or iron rings, of a definite weight.[16]

THEY thought it a crime to eat hares, geese, or hens, though they bred them for pleasure. One of their most extraordinary and pernicious customs was, that community of women among ten or twelve men, who chose to form such an association, which reminds us of the Arreoys of Otaheite. The British Arreoys, however, seem not to have destroyed their children; as these were agreed to

[12] Strabo, lib. iv. p. 306. Cæsar. lib. v. c. 17. Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 301.

[13] Cæsar. lib. v. c. 10.

[14] Strabo, lib. iv. p. 305.

[15] Diod. lib. v. p. 301. Pliny notices that they used a species of lime as a manure, which he calls white chalk, lib. xvii. c. 4.

[16] Cæsar. lib. v. c. 10. It is supposed that Cunobelin, the successor of Cassivellaun, first coined money in Britain. "About fifty of his coins, with his own name, have come down to the present age. Some of them exhibit a plane surface, but most a small convexity." Whit. Manch. book i. c. 9. One of them represents a bard with his harp, ibid. c. 7. sect. 5.

Digitized by Google

be considered as the offspring of the man who had married the mother.[17]

In battle their chief strength was in their infantry.[18] But they fought also on horses, and more especially in chariots, with scythes at the axles.[19] In these they rode, throwing darts on every side; and, by the dread of the horses, and the noise of the wheels, they often disordered their opponents. When they had broken in among the horse, they leaped from the cars, and fought on foot. The drivers retired a little out of the battle, but so stationed themselves, as to be ready to receive the combatants if pressed by the enemy. Thus, to the activity of cavalry, they united the steadiness of infantry. By daily use and practice, they were so expert, that they could stop their horses at full speed down a declivity, could guide and turn them, run along the beam, stand on the yoke, and from thence, with rapidity, dart into their chariots.[20] Diodorus, in mentioning the British war-chariots, recalls to our mind, that the heroes of the Trojan war used them likewise; there was, however, this difference, that among the Britons the driver was the superior person.[21]

The honourable testimony of Diodorus to their superiority to the Romans in some of those moral virtues, in which the nomadic nations excelled the civilised, must not be omitted. "There is a simplicity in their manners, which is very different from that craft and wickedness which mankind

[17] Cæsar. lib. v. c. 10.
[18] Tacitus.
[19] Mela, lib. iii. c. 6.
[20] Cæsar. lib. iv. c. 29.
[21] Diod. lib. v. p. 301. Honestior auriga; clientes propugnant. Tacit. Vit. Agr.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

now exhibit. They are satisfied with a frugal sustenance, and avoid the luxuries of wealth."[22]

Their religion.

THE religion of the Britons was of a fierce and sanguinary nature. It resembled that of the Gauls, which is thus described. They who were afflicted with severe disease, or involved in dangers or battles, sacrificed men for victims, or vowed that they would do so. The Druids administered at these gloomy rites. They thought that the life of a man was to be redeemed by a man's life; and that there was no other mode of conciliating their gods. Some made images of wicker work of an immense size, and filled them with living men, whom they burned alive. Thieves and robbers, or other criminals, were usually made the victims; but if there were a deficiency of these, the guiltless were sacrificed.[23] At some of their sacred rites the British women went naked, but stained dark, like Ethiopians, by a vegetable[24] juice. That they consulted their gods on futurity, by inspecting the quivering flesh of their human victims, and that they had prophetic women, has been already mentioned.[25]

THEIR superstitious fancies deemed the misseltoe sacred, if it vegetated from the oak. They selected groves of oaks, and thought every thing sent from heaven which grew on this tree. On the sixth day of the moon, which was the beginning of their months and years, and of their period of thirty years, they came to the oak on

[22] Diod. p. 301. [23] Cæsar. lib. vi. c. 15.
[24] Pliny, lib. xxii. c. 2.
[25] See before, p. 43. That the Kelts sacrificed human victims to a deity, whom the Greeks called Kronos, and the Latins Saturn, we learn from Dionysius Halic. lib. i. p. 30.

Digitized by Google

which they observed any of the parasitical plant (which they called all-healing), prepared a sacrifice and a feast under this venerated tree, and brought thither two white bulls, whose horns were then first tied. The officiating Druid, in a white garment, climbed the tree, and, with a golden knife, pruned off the misseltoe, which was received in a white woollen cloth below. They then sacrificed the victims, and addressed their gods to make the misseltoe prosperous to those to whom it was given; for they believed that it caused fecundity, and was an amulet against poison. They performed no ceremonies without the leaves of the oak.[26]

THE ancient world, including the most enlightened nations, even Greece and Rome, were universally impressed with a belief of the powers of magic. But the expressions of Pliny induce us to imagine, that this mischievous imposture was peculiarly cultivated by the British Druids. He says, "Britain now celebrates it so astonishingly, and with so many ceremonies, that she might even be thought to have given it to the Persians."[27] The Druids were indeed so superior in knowledge and intellect to the rest of the nation, that their magical frauds must have been easily invented and securely practised.

[26] Pliny, lib. xvi. c. 95. As derw is British for an oak, and derwydd is the term for a Druid in the same language, it is probable that this class of persons was named from the tree they venerated. Maximus Tyrius calls the oak, the Keltic image of the Deity. Dissert.

[27] Pliny, lib. xxx. c. 4. The Welsh term for right-hand, seems to have some reference to the ancient superstitions of the Britons. It is deheulaw, or the south-hand; an expression which can only be true, when we look at the east. The circles at Stonehenge appear to have a reference to the rising of the sun at the solstice.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

Their Druids.

THE Druidical system began in Britain, and from thence was introduced into Gaul. In Cæsar's time, they who wished to know it more diligently, for the most part visited Britain, for the sake of learning it. The Druids were present at all religious rites; they administered at public and private sacrifices; and they interpreted divinations. They were so honoured, that they decided almost all public and private controversies, and all causes, whether of homicide, inheritance, or boundaries. They appointed the remunerations, and the punishments. Whoever disobeyed their decree, was interdicted from their sacrifices, which, with them, was the severest punishment. An interdicted person was deemed both impious and wicked; all fled from him, and avoided his presence and conversation, lest they should be contaminated by the intercourse. He was allowed no legal rights. He participated in no honours.

THE Druids obeyed one chief, who had supreme authority over them. At his death, he was succeeded by the next in dignity. If others had equal pretences, the suffrages of the Druids decided it; and sometimes arms determined the competition.[26]

THE Druids had great privileges. They neither paid taxes, nor engaged in war. They were allowed exemption from warfare and all other offices. Excited by such advantages, many voluntarily submitted to the discipline, and others were sent by their friends and relations. They were said to learn a great number of verses there; so that some remained twenty years under the education. They

[26] Cæsar.

Digitized by Google

conceived it not lawful to commit their knowledge to writing, though in all other things they used Greek characters. Cæsar adds, that a great number of youth resorted to them for education.

They taught that souls never perished; but passed at death into other bodies; and as this opinion removed the fear of death, they thought that it excited strongly to what they called virtue, of which valour was the most conspicuous quality. They discussed and taught also many things concerning the stars, and their motion; the size of the world, and its countries; the nature of things; and the force and power of the immortal gods.[29] Such subjects of contemplation and tuition as these, shew a knowledge and an exerted intellect, that could not have been the natural growth of a people so rude as the Britons and Gauls. They must have derived both the information and the habit from more civilised regions. The Druidical order consisted of three sorts of men; Druids, Bards, and Ouates. The Bards were the poets and musicians, of whom some were satirists, and some encomiasts. The Ouates sacrificed, divined, and contemplated the nature of things. The Druids cultivated physiology and moral philosophy; or, as Diodorus says, were their philosophers and theologians.[30]

Of the Druidical superstitions, we have no monuments remaining, unless the circles of stones, which are to be seen in some parts of the island, are deemed their temples. Of all the suppositions concerning Stonehenge and Avebury, it seems the

[29] Cæsar. lib. vi. c. 18. Mela, lib. iii. c. 20.; and see Lucan's celebrated verses on their theory of transmigration.

[30] Diod. Sicul. lib. v. p. 308. Strabo, lib. iv. p. 302.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

most rational to ascribe them to the Druidical order; and of this system we may remark, that if it was the creature of a more civilised people, none of the colonisers of Britain are so likely to have been its parents, as the Phenicians and Carthaginians.[31] The fact so explicitly asserted by Cæsar, that the Druidical system began in Britain, and was thence introduced into Gaul, increases our tendency to refer it to these nations. The state of Britain was inferior in civilisation to that of Gaul, and therefore it seems more reasonable to refer the intellectual parts of Druidism to the foreign visitors, who are known to have cultivated such subjects, than to suppose them to have originated from the rude unassisted natives.

[31] Syria, Phenicia, and Palestine abound with many solid rocks and stony mountains cut into shapes, and excavated into chambers, and with erections of stones for the purposes of superstition. Mr. Watts' Views in Syria and Palestine, from the drawings in Sir Robert Ainslie's collection, exhibit some curious remains of this sort. Dr. Stukely, in his letter to Mr. Gale, in 1743, states, that he had found a Druidical Temple at Shap in Westmoreland. He says, "I have got a drawing and admeasurement of the stones of Shap. I find it to be another huge serpentine temple like that of Avebury. The measure of what are left extend to a mile and an half, but a great deal has been demolished." *Reliq. Gal.* p. 387. A writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for Feb. 1833 thinks Dr. Stukely right in calling the whole collection of stones a temple. "It is not a Danish monument. It is a remarkable feature of Westmoreland and Cumberland, that their uncultivated hills and plains are scattered all over with Druidical remains, while in Northumberland and Durham, which adjoin them on the east, scarcely any thing of the kind exist."—A Dolman, or Druid's cave, near Saumur, in France, is described in "Six Weeks on the Loire."

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

Invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar. — Its final Conquest by the Romans.

CHAP. VI.

Such were the Britons whom Cæsar invaded. After his conquest in Gaul, and an expedition into Germany, he resolved to visit Britain. We need not ascribe this invasion to the British pearls, alluded to by Suetonius. The ambition of Cæsar, like that of all men of great minds, who have accomplished vast attempts, expanded with his successes. Accustomed to grand conceptions, and feeling from their experience of their own talents, and the abundance of their means, a facility of prosecuting the most capacious plans; it has been usual with conquerors, who have united sovereignty with their military triumphs, instead of enjoying their fame in peaceful repose, to dare new enterprises of danger and difficulty, and of mighty issue. Cæsar appears to have amused himself in forming great projects. He not only purposed to build a temple to Mars, whose magnitude was to surpass whatever the world had seen of religious architecture; to drain the Pomptine marshes; to make a highway through the Apeninnes, from the Adriatic to the Tiber; and to cut through the isthmus of Corinth[1]: but he had also a dream of subduing the Parthians on the Euphrates; of marching along the Caspian, and Mount Caucasus to the Euxine; of invading Scythia; from thence of penetrating

[1] Suet. Vit. Cæs. s. 44.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

and conquering Germany; and from that country, of returning through Gaul, into Italy and Rome.[2] That a mind, delighting to contemplate schemes so vast and extravagant, should not have reached the shores of Gaul, and surveyed the British island, then possessing the fame of being a new world, little known even to its Keltic neighbours as to its interior, without feeling the desire to explore it, was a natural event. Cæsar, under this impulse, collected the merchants of Gaul, who had been accustomed to visit the island; and enquired of them its size, what and how many nations inhabited it, their mode of warfare, their customs, and their harbours. Obtaining from those whom he questioned but scanty information, he sent one of his officers, in a vessel, to explore the coast, and collected all the ships, within his command, to make the exploring enterprize.

Some of the British states, hearing of his intentions from the Keltic merchants, sent envoys of peace.

His first expedition into Britain was to reconnoitre; not to subdue. He was compelled to fight upon his landing, in the vicinity of Dover, because the Kentish Britons immediately opposed him — conflicting even amidst the waves, with signal courage; and although Cæsar, observing his troops to be dispirited by the British attacks, ordered up the vessels with his artillery, and poured from their sides stones, arrows, and other missiles, yet the natives stood the unusual discharges with intrepidity, and he made no impression. It was the rushing forward, alone, of the bearer of the eagle of the

[2] Plut. Vit. Cæs.

Digitized by Google

tenth legion, exclaiming, "Follow me, unless you mean to betray your standard to your enemies," that roused the Roman legions to that desperate and closer battle, which at length forced back the Britons, and secured a landing. The Britons retired; and Cæsar did not pursue. The natives of the locality sent a message of peace; but four days afterwards, a tempest dispersing his fleet, they assaulted the Romans with new attacks. Cæsar repulsed them; but after this success he thought it expedient, without advancing, to quit the island suddenly at midnight. He ascribes his departure to the approach of the autumnal equinox; but he knew of this event before his landing. The truth seems to be that he found his present force, though sufficient to repel the Britons, yet incompetent to subdue them.[3]

His next invasion in the ensuing summer, was more formidable. It was made with five well appointed legions, and two thousand cavalry — a force of thirty thousand of the best disciplined troops then known, under the ablest commander. As the Britons did not contest the landing, it was easily effected. On this visit he quitted the coasts, and marched twelve miles into the island. There he repulsed an attack. A storm again shattering his fleet, he stopped his advance, and returned to the coast, to provide for the safety of his ships. Ten days afterwards he resumed his former position, and was immediately assaulted by some of

[3] Cæsar. lib. iv. c. 18—33. On this expedition Dio's observation seems a fair one: — "He obtained from it nothing, either for himself or for his country, but the glory of having fought in it; and as he stated this very strongly, the people of Rome wondered, and extolled him." Lib. xxxix. p. 128.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

the British tribes, who had confederated under the temporary command of Cassivellaun. They were repelled. They attempted hostilities again on the succeeding day; but were again defeated. On these failures, the auxiliary bodies left Cassivellaun; and Cæsar being informed of their desertion, ventured to advance to the Thames, and to the borders of the state of the British prince. The ford had been fortified by sharp stakes, under the water, and on the banks. The Romans passed it up to their necks in water, in the presence of the natives collected in arms on the other side, who, dismayed at the courage of the enemy, hastily retired.

CASSIVELLAUN, keeping only four thousand war chariots with him, confined his efforts to harassing the invaders.

THE civil dissensions of the island, then began to give Cæsar the advantage of his enterprises. The Trinobantes, of whose territories London was the metropolis, desired his aid, for their chief Mandubratius, or Androgorus, against Cassivellaun; and five other tribes also sent in their submission. Cæsar was afterwards attacked by four kings of Kent, Cingetorix, Carnilius, Taximagulus, and Segonax, but without success; and Cassivellaun now sending an embassy for peace[4], Cæsar immediately granted it, demanded hostages, appointed a tribute, retired with his army to the sea coast, and

[4] Cæsar. lib. v. c. 7—19. Dio remarks, that it would have been dangerous to him to have wintered in the island, lib. xl. p. 137. Polyænus has preserved a story that Cæsar's success in battle against the Britons was obtained by placing an armed elephant with a tower of soldiers in his front, whose appearance threw the natives into a panic. But Cæsar's force, skill, and discipline, were sufficient to have obtained his victories without this stratagem.

Digitized by Google

relanded it in Gaul.[5] The Romans appeared no more in Britain, nor attempted to molest it, for several years. CHAP. VI.

Augustus afterwards talked of an expedition to Britain, and entered France, as if beginning it. But the Britons met him there with peaceful embassies; and custom-duties were imposed on the commodities that were objects of trade between Gaul and Britain; as ivory, bridles, amber, and glass vessels. Strabo well remarks, that to have raised a tribute from the island, he must have established a military force there, but the expence of these troops would have consumed the contribution; and when violent courses are pursued, he adds, danger begins.[6]

Tiberius was content to leave Britain unmolested. Caligula was flattered in Gaul, by one of the British princes seeking an asylum in his court; and drawing up his army on the sea shore, he sounded a charge and commanded them to gather cockle-shells, as indications of a conquest. With

[5] From Cæsar's own account, as thus abstracted, we perceive the propriety of Horace applying the epithet of *intactus* to Britain, as also of the *invictus* of Propertius. Tacitus has justly given the amount of his successes, when he states, that he did not subdue the island, but only showed it to the Romans. This correct intimation keeps clear of Lucan's extreme, that he showed his affrighted back to the Britons; and of that of Paterculus, that he twice passed through the island. His successes, however, astonished and delighted his countrymen. He offered to Venus, whom he once stated to be the ancestor of one of his aunts (Suet. c. 6.), a breast-plate of British pearls. Pliny. The victories over the Britons were painted on purple hangings; and some of the natives were given to the theatre. See Virgil, Georg. 3., and Servius on the passage, p. 126.

[6] Horace. Strabo. In the following year Augustus resumed his project of an invasion, because the natives broke their treaty; but the insurrection of the Cantabri in Spain prevented it. The "adjectis Britannis imperio," of Horace, is therefore rather a poetical figure, than an achieved fact.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

this bloodless triumph, and the erection of a watch-tower to commemorate it, his ambition was satisfied. He left Britain to the continuation of those internal wars which all uncivilised nations pursue; and which at last occasioned some to sacrifice their patriotism to their revenge, and to incite Claudius, his successor, to order Aulus Plautus to lead an army into the island.[7] This general landed with a powerful force, comprising German auxiliaries and some elephants; and with Vespasian for one of his officers. He had the usual successes of the Roman discipline and skill. The emperor Claudius came himself to partake the triumph. He took Camalodunum or Malden, the capital of Cunobellin's dominion; and, after a residence of sixteen days in the island, returned to Rome, leaving Plautus to govern Britain.[8] Games, triumphal arches, dramatic representations, horse-races, bear-combats, pyrrhic dances, gladiators, rewards to his officers, and a splendid triumph to himself, with the surname of Britannicus, attested his own and the national exultations at his successes in Britain.

VESPASIAN distinguished himself in Britain at this period. He fought thirty battles with the natives, took twenty towns, and subdued the Isle of Wight[9]: exertions which imply corresponding

[7] Dio mentions Bericus as one of this description, lib. lx. p. 779. His remark on the political state of the Britons is, "that they were not αυτονομοι, but were subject to several kings." Ibid. Of these, Plautus first defeated Kataratakos, and afterwards Togodoumnos, the two sons of Kunobellin. Ibid.

[8] Dio, lib. lx. p. 781, 782. Tacitus's account of this invasion has perished in his last books. That elephants were used by the Romans in England, appears from the bones of an elephant having been found, on digging for gravel, in a field near Battle Bridge. 1 Lel. Collect. p. lxiv.

[9] Sueton. Vesp. c. 4.

Digitized by Google

efforts and intrepidity on the part of the Britons. The great Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, fought here also as military tribune under his father, with much reputation both for his modesty and courage.[10] It is interesting to read of this celebrated man, that when Vespasian was surrounded by the Britons, and in extreme danger, Titus rushed upon the assailing enemies, and at last extricated his revered parent.[11] We may consider this great instrument of Providence as training himself, unconsciously, in Britain, for the awful task he was to accomplish.

The island, although thus penetrated to a certain extent, and the southern parts occupied by the Romans, was as yet neither conquered nor tranquil. Seven years afterwards, we find Ostorius withstanding the British assaults, and establishing a line of posts between the Nen and the Severn. The Britons on the east and north, and afterwards those of Wales, renewed the conflicts. The defeat and capture of Caradawg or Caractacus, whose appearance at Rome, as a prisoner, excited peculiar exultation, and for whom an impressive speech has been composed by Tacitus, of which the rude Briton could only recognise the manly feeling it displays[12], secured the Roman conquests.

[10] Suet. Tit. c. 4.

[11] Dio, Cas. lib. lx. p. 788. Josephus mentions the extraordinary strength and activity of Titus, and gives instances of his rescuing his soldiers from the Jews by his personal exertions. Few pieces of history are more interesting, than Josephus's account of the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

[12] See it in Tacitus, Ann. lib. xii. c. 37. Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, whom Caractacus had married, was afterwards subdued. Ibid. c. 40. The allusions to these victories in Britain, in the Roman poets of the day, show the joy of the public feeling on that occasion. See them collected in Camden's Introduction to the Britannia.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

About ten years afterwards, the Britons rushed to a new effort to regain their independence, under Boadicea, which they began, like Mithridates in Asia, by an inhuman massacre of all the Romans within their reach. This new struggle has been described by Tacitus with all his energy. The Roman governor Suetonius happened to be a man of talent, equal to the emergency, and finally triumphed over all the fury and forces of the Britons. Boadicea poisoned herself; and the island was again subdued into terror and peace[13], though much remained unconquered.

Vespasian had the recollection of his personal exploits, to excite his military attention to Britain, after he had obtained the empire. He sent powerful armies to extend the Roman conquest. The conflicts continued with varying success: but the Britons were resolute and undaunted by failure.[14]

Seventeen years after the revolt of Boadicea, Agricola was appointed to command the Roman forces in Britain; and by him the conquest of the island was completed. The pen and affection of Tacitus have amply, and interestingly, detailed his political and military conduct; and has made Galgacus or Gallawg, on the Grampian Hills, as interesting as Caractacus.[15] It is needless to detail battles that so much resemble each other, and

It is amusing to read that our island was deemed a new world, an impervious region of frost and snow, where stars never set, and placed beyond the limits of the earth, &c. &c.

[13] Tacit. Ann. lib. xiv. c. 29—39., and more concisely in his life of Agricola, c. 14—16.

[14] These events are briefly noticed by Tacitus in his Agricola, c. 16, 17. One of the able governors here was Frontinus, the author of the book on the stratagems of war.

[15] His animated, and no doubt much amplified and polished speech is in Vit. Agric. s. 30.

Digitized by Google

always pain humanity both to read and to narrate. It is more pleasing to contemplate the wisdom of his liberal mind, which directed its powers to civilise and improve the fierce natives. He assisted them to build temples, forums, and more convenient habitations. He inspired them with a love of education; he applauded their talents; flattered them as possessing a genius superior to the Gauls; and he persuaded the sons of the chiefs to study letters. The Roman dress, language, and literature gradually spread among the natives. All this was improvement; but human advantages are mingled with imperfections. The civilisation of Rome also introduced its luxury: and baths, porticoes, and sensual banquets became as palatable to the new subjects as to their corrupted masters.[16] Four legions were kept in the island. Their labours pervaded it with four great military roads, that became the chief Saxon highways; and in the military stations, upon and near them, laid the foundations of our principal towns and cities. The Roman laws and magistracies were every where established, and the British lawyers, as well as the British ladies[17], have obtained the panegyrics of the Roman classics. It is beautifully said by Rutilius, that Rome filled the world with her legislative triumphs, and caused all to live under one common pact; that she blended discordant nations into one

[16] Tac. Ag. s. 21.

[17] The stern Juvenal has

Gallia causidicos docuit facunda Britannos. *Sat.*

And Martial has an epigram on the decus formæ of a British lady, whom he calls Claudia Rufina. The epithet of blue-eyed, which he applies to the Britons, was also given to them by Seneca. All the northern nations of Europe exhibit, in their physiognomy, this contrast with the black eyes and darker skins of Italy.

Digitized by Google

BOOK I.

country; and, by imparting to those she conquered a companionship in her rights and laws, made the earth one great united city.[18]

A.C. 121. BRITAIN, nearly half a century after Agricola, was visited by the Emperor Hadrian, who ordered the construction of a military work, from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway Frith, as the boundary of the Roman provinces in Britain. In the next reign, of Antoninus Pius, the Romans penetrated again to the isthmus, between the firths of Forth and Clyde; and built another military rampart, for the farthest boundary of their empire in Britain.[19] In 170 the Romans are said to have deserted all the country which lay to the north of the wall of Antoninus.[20]

AFTER this period, the Roman legions in Britain began to support their commanders in their competitions for the empire. During these disputes, two unsubdued nations in the northern parts of Britain, the Caledonians and Meatæ, broke through the rampart between the firths, and harassed the province. The emperor Severus came to Britain

A.C. 207. to repress them.[21] His wars in Scotland cost him much toil, and many men; but he subdued his wild opponents, and, instead of the weak barrier of Hadrian, he erected an immense wall of stone, twelve feet high, and eight feet thick, strengthened with

[18] Legiferis mundum complexa triumphis
Fœdere communi vivere cuncta facit—
Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam—
Dum que offers victis proprii consortia juris
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat. *Rutil. Itin.*

[19] "Betwixt them Agricola had formerly erected a line of forts. These had not been destroyed, and Lollius joined them together by a long rampart." Whit. Manch. vol. ii. p. 86., 8vo.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Herodian, lib. iii. p. 83. Xiphelin in Sever. p. 339.

Digitized by Google

towers, castles, and stations at proper distances, and defended by a ditch and military way. This great work (the vestiges of which are still visible in several places,) was built nearly parallel to that of Hadrian, at the distance of a few paces further to the north, and from the east coast near Tinmouth, to the Solway firth at Boulness, on the west coast.[22] Severus died at York. As it was soon after this period that the Saxons began to molest Britain, we shall proceed to narrate the history of the invasion and occupation of Britain by the Saxons and Angles, after first stating all that can be collected of their authentic history, before they left the continent.

CHAP. VI.

The wall built.

A.C. 211.

[22] Eutropius, lib. viii.; and see Henry's History of England, vol. ii. App. No. 9., and Horsley's Britannia Romana. We derive some curious information on the Roman stations and residence in Britain from the compilation of Richard of Cirencester, first printed in 1757 from a MS. of the fourteenth century. It presents us with eighteen Itinera, which, he says, he collected from the remains of Records which a Roman general had caused to be made. Mr. Whitaker's remarks upon it, a little tinged with his sanguine feelings, are in his Hist. Manch. vol. ii. p. 83—91. Dr. Gouch's edition of Camden's Britannia, Mr. Lyson's works, and the Archæologia of the Society of Antiquaries, will supply the inquirer with many notices of Roman remains found in this country. Even in the last year, 1835, and the present, 1836, new discoveries of these, and of their coins, have occurred in various counties, some even in London, on digging below the present surface for the foundations of new buildings. A quantity of Roman coins, chiefly of Vespasian and Domitian, were lately found in improving the road from Shap to Kendal, nineteen gold, five hundred and eighty silver. Gent. Mag., Feb. 1833. Roman coffins, with inscriptions, were recently discovered in York Castle Yard, a dozen feet below the surface. Some Roman tiles, also, in St. Cuthbert's Churchyard, with the inscription, Leg. ix. Hisp. In the mint yard there, in the spring of 1833, a stone was found with the inscription, that one Hieronymus, of the sixth legion, had raised there a temple to Serapis, the Egyptian God: "Deo Sancto Serapi Templum a solo fecit." York Papers.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The Origin of the SAXONS.

BOOK II.

THE Anglo-Saxons were the people who transported themselves from the Cymbric peninsula, and its vicinity, in the fifth and sixth centuries, into England. They were branches of the great Saxon confederation, which, from the Elbe, extended itself at last to the Rhine. The hostilities of this formidable people had long distressed the western regions of Europe; and when the Gothic nations overran the most valuable provinces of Rome, the Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain soon after the Romans quitted it. The ancient inhabitants, and the progeny of the Roman settlers, disappeared as the new conquerors advanced, or accepted their yoke; and Saxon laws, Saxon language, Saxon manners, government, and institutions, overspread the land.

THIS revolution, than which history presents to us none more complete, has made the fortunes of the Saxons, during every period, interesting to us. Though other invaders have appeared in the island, yet the effects of the Anglo-Saxon settlements have prevailed beyond every other. Our language, our government, and our laws, display our Gothic ancestors in every part: they live, not merely in our annals and traditions, but in our civil institutions and perpetual discourse. The parent-

Digitized by Google

tree is indeed greatly amplified, by branches engrafted on it from other regions, and by the new shoots, which the accidents of time, and the improvements of society, have produced; but it discovers yet its Saxon origin, and retains its Saxon properties, though more than thirteen centuries have rolled over, with all their tempests and vicissitudes.

ALTHOUGH the Saxon name became, on the continent, the appellation of a confederacy of nations, yet, at first, it denoted a single state. The Romans began to remark it, during the second century of the Christian æra; until that period, it had escaped the notice of the conquerors of the world, and the happy obscurity was rewarded by the absence of that desolation which their ambition poured profusely on mankind.

Saxons first mentioned by Ptolemy.

PTOLEMY, the Alexandrian, was the first writer whom we know to have mentioned the Saxons. By the passage in his Geography, and by the concurrence of all their future history, it is ascertained, that, before the year 141 of our era[1], there was a people called Saxones, who inhabited a territory at the north side of the Elbe, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, and three small islands, at the mouth of this river. From the same author it is also clear, that the Saxones were of no great importance at this period; for in this peninsula, which

[1] Ptolemy lived in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, according to Suidas, vol. ii. p. 646.; but he testifies himself, in the 7th book Mag. Synt., p. 167., that he made astronomical observations at Alexandria in the 2d year of Ant. Pius, or ann. Christi, 139. 3 Fab. Bibl. Græc. p. 412. He speaks also of an eclipse of the moon in the 9th of Adrian, or ann. Christi, 125. De la Lande's Astron. i. p. 312. He mentions no observation beyond 141. Ib. 117.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

is now divided into Jutland, Sleswick, and Holstein, no fewer than six other nations were stationed, besides the Saxones and the remnant of the Cimbri.[2]

But it is not probable that the Saxons should have started suddenly into existence, in the days of Ptolemy. The question of their previous history has been therefore much agitated; and an equal quantity of learning and of absurdity has been brought forward upon the subject.

It has been observed, that to explain the origin of the Saxons, the most wild and inconsistent fictions have been framed.[3] But it is not this nation only, which has been thus distinguished by the perverseness of the human mind, labouring to explore inscrutable antiquity; every people may recount similar puerilities.

To claim an extravagant duration, has been the folly of every state which has risen to any eminence. We have heard, in our childhood, of the dreams of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Indians, and Chinese; and we know that even Athenians could wear a golden grasshopper[4], as an emblem, that they sprung fortuitously from the earth they cultivated, in ages far beyond the reach of human history: we may therefore pardon and forget the fables of the Saxon patriots.

[2] Cl. Ptolemæus Georg. lib. ii. c. 11. Marcianus of Heraclea, somewhat later than Ptolemy, gives the Saxons the same position on the neck of the Chersonesus. Pont. ib. 651. The geographical lexicographer of Byzantium, usually named Stephanus, briefly says, "dwelling in the Cimbric Chersonesus." Steph. Byz. voc. Saxones.

[3] Krantz remarked this: "Ita puerilibus fabulis et anilibus deliramentis omnia scatent, ut nihil in his sibi constet, nihil quadret." Saxonia, p. i. Yet the absurdity of others did not preserve him from an imitation.

[4] Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. p. 2. So the Arcadians boasted they were προσελήνοι, or before the moon. Ib. p. 1.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

IT has caused much surprise, that Tacitus, who wrote a particular description of Germany, many years before Ptolemy, should have omitted to name the Saxons.[5] Every author has been unwilling to suppose, that they came to the Elbe in the short interval between these authors; and therefore it has been very generally imagined, that the nation, to whom Tacitus gave the denomination of Fosi[6], were the warriors, who acquired afterwards so much celebrity, under the name of Saxons.

Not noticed by Tacitus.

BEFORE such violent suppositions are admitted, it seems necessary to ask, if Ptolemy mentions any other people, in his geography of Germany, whom Tacitus has not noticed? if he does, the omission of Tacitus is not, in the present instance, singular; if he does not, the conjecture that the Fosi were the Saxons, comes to us with authority.

UPON comparing the Cimbric Chersonesus of Tacitus, with the delineation of the same place by Ptolemy, the question above stated is decided. Ptolemy does not mention the Saxones only, as being there; on the contrary, he names, separately, six other nations, before he comes to the Cimbri. Tacitus, after mentioning the Frisii, Chauci, and Cherusci, speaks of the Fosi, and closes his account of this part of Germany with the Cimbri. Tacitus has not merely neglected to

Other tribes omitted by Tacitus.

[5] Conringius thinks, that by some unexplained accident, time has effaced from the text of Tacitus a passage about the Saxons. Schilter's Thes. Ant. Teut. iii. p. 704.

[6] Cellarius Geog. Ant. i. p. 303., and Cluverius, iii. Germ. Ant. 87., and many others assert this. Spencer with diffidence defends it. Notit. Germ. Ant. 363. With a manly but rare impartiality he states forcibly the objections to the opinion he adopts, 371. Leibnitz places the Fosi on the Fusa, a river which falls into the Aller, near Zell. Ibid. 372.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

name the Saxons, but also the Sigulones, the Sabalingii, the Cobandi, the Chali, the Phundusii, and the Charudes.[7] If either of these tribes had risen to eminence, the one, so successful, would have been thought the Fosi. The Saxons became renowned, and their celebrity, rather than their situation, has made some persons desirous to find them in Tacitus. The name of Fosi cannot be strictly applied to the Saxons, with more justice than to the others.[8]

But it cannot be inferred from the silence of Tacitus, that the Saxons were not above the Elbe in his days. In this part of his map of Germany, he does not seem to have intended to give that minute detail of information, which Ptolemy, fortunately for our subject, has delivered. Tacitus directed his philosophical eye on the German states, who differed in manners, as well as in name. He seldom presents a mere nomenclature; he seems to enumerate those the most carefully, whose wars, customs, fame, vicissitudes, and power, had distinguished them from the rest. As the Saxons, and their neighbours, were not remarkable in either of these circumstances, he knew them not, or he passed them over; but Ptolemy pursues the plan

[7] Cluverius thus stations these tribes. The Sigulones northward from the Saxons, as far as Tunderen and Appenrade; Sabalingii, above these, to the Nipsa and Tobesket, on which are Ripen and Kolding; Cobandi, thence to Holm and Horsens; Chali, beyond these to Hensburg and Hald; the Phundusii and Charudes on the west and east, northward to the Lymfort; and the Cimbri in Wensussel. Ant. Ger. iii. p. 94. See also on this Chorography Pontanus, p. 649.

[8] Strabo, Tacitus, and Ptolemy, exhibit a very natural progression of information on the German geography. Tacitus gives a more accurate detail than Strabo, and Ptolemy, writing later, is still more minute.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

of a plain and accurate chorographer; he is solicitous to mark positions, latitudes, distances, and names, leaving narrations of history and manners almost out of his consideration. It was therefore a part of his plan to notice the Saxons, as it was consistent in Tacitus to have omitted them.

THE only inferences which can be safely drawn from the silence of Tacitus, and the preceding geographers, are, that the Saxons were then an obscure and inconsiderable people, and had neither molested the nations of greater notoriety, nor incurred the enmity of the Roman government.

The Scythian population of Europe.

IT will be unnecessary to employ our time, in enumerating the many fallacious theories which have been framed, on the origin of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. It will be more useful to select those few facts which may be gleaned from the writers of antiquity on this subject, and to state to the reader, rather what he may believe, than what he must reject.

THE early occupation of Europe, by the Kimmerian and Keltic races, has been already displayed. The next stream of barbaric tribes, whose progress formed the second great influx of population into Europe, were the Scythian, German, and Gothic tribes. They also entered it out of Asia. It is of importance to recollect the fact of their primeval locality, because it corresponds with this circumstance, that Herodotus, besides the main Scythia, which he places in Europe, mentions also an Eastern or Asiatic Scythia, beyond the Caspian and Iaxartes.[9] As these new comers

[9] This Asiatic Scythia suits Mr. Abel Remusat's inference, in his Memoir lately read before the Academie des Inscriptions, that the Goths originally issued from Tartary, because near Mount Altai

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

pressed on the Kimmerians and Kelts, their predecessors, those nations retired towards the western and southern extremities of Europe, pursued still by the Scythian invaders. This new wave of population gradually spread over the mountains, and into the vast forests and marshes of Europe, until, under the name of Germans, an appellation which Tacitus calls a recent name [10], they had not only reached the Rhine, but had also crossed it into France. Here Cæsar found one great body firmly settled, descended from them, whom he calls Belgæ; though its component states had their peculiar denominations [11], besides a very large force of recent German invaders, under the command of Ariovistus.

This second stock of the European population is peculiarly interesting to us, because from its branches not only our own immediate ancestors, but also those of the most celebrated nations of modern Europe, have unquestionably descended. The Anglo-Saxons, Lowland Scotch, Normans,

inscriptions have been found in Runic characters like those of Scandinavia. On this point we must always recollect, that the northern traditions about Odin, the common ancestor of the Scandinavians, Saxons, and Goths, bring him, at the head of the Asæ, from the Asiatic regions.

[10] De Mor. Germ.

[11] De Bell. Gall. The fact that nations of the same origin had yet different local or provincial names; as the Germans who passed the Rhine becoming Tungri, and part of the Belgæ, Bellovaci, &c., must be remembered, when we consider the derivation of nations; as the omission of this recollection has occasioned many antiquaries to consider those people as distinct in origin, who were really related. Tacitus remarks, that the Trevisi and Nervii were ambitious of a German origin, though residing in and near Gaul. Indeed, his whole book, on the Germans, proves that each tribe went by very distinct appellations, though all were Germans. This may lessen the scruples of those who doubt whether the Getæ and Goths were Scythian nations.

Digitized by Google

Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, Dutch, Belgians, Lombards, and Franks, have all sprung from that great fountain of the human race, which we have distinguished by the terms Scythian, German, or Gothic. [12]

THE ancient languages of these nations prove their ancient affinity, the contiguous chronology of their first origin, and their common derivation; and afford evidences of these truths, from which every one may satisfy his doubts or his curiosity. We have works still existing in the ancient Gothic [13], and Saxon [14], as well as in the Frankish [15]

[12] Mr. Archdeacon Coxe, in his "Vindication of the Celts," has rebuked many of Mr. Pinkerton's erroneous opinions, unfounded declamation, wrong quotations, and misconstruction and misapplication of several ancient authorities. But amid these faults I have no doubt of the correctness of Mr. Pinkerton's general notion, that the German, Scythian, and Gothic nations were of the same generic family. This is all that I can praise in his Dissertation on the Goths; for the chronology which he attempts to build up, and many of his details are not only unwarranted, but inconsistent with true history. Mr. Pinkerton and Mr. Whitaker, alike in their angry temperament of mind, and mode of reading, and stating ancient authorities, are in two extremes as to their inferences. The latter strives to make every thing Keltic, the former Scythian. Both are too apt to make their authorities speak rather what they wish, than what they find: they are equally intolerant of any contrary opinion; and though the one abhors and the other accredits Ossian, almost the only point in which they agree is to abuse Mr. Macpherson. Both, however, were men of vigorous minds and extensive reading; and deserve much praise for having devoted so much attention to these uninviting studies. The fire of genius at times burnt with great energy in Mr. Whitaker, and makes us lament that he did not direct it to more congenial themes.

[13] The fragment of the Gospels, in the celebrated Silver MSS. of the Meso-Gothic, printed by Marshall with the Saxon Gospels in 1665, and recently with more splendor and accuracy, preserve a most interesting specimen of the ancient Gothic tongue.

[14] The present work will contain many specimens of this language. Wotton's Conspectus contains a copious catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon MSS. that exist.

[15] The Franco-Theotisc versified harmony of the four evangelists, by Otfrid, and several other specimens of this language of the ancient Franks, are published with a glossary valuable to a certain extent, but which is capable of much improvement, in Schilter's Thesaurus.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

and Icelandic[16], in which the philologist will easily perceive their mutual relationship. The comparison of these with the modern German, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, and Flemish, will equally demonstrate the kinship between the ancient parents and their existing descendants. [17]

Scythians in Asia.

THE first appearance of the Scythian tribes in Europe may be placed, according to Strabo and Homer, about the eighth, or according to Herodotus, in the seventh century before the Christian æra.[18] Herodotus likewise states, that the Scythians declared their nation to be more recent than any other, and that they reckoned only one thousand years between Targitaos, their first king, and the aggression of Darius. The first scenes of their civil existence, and of their progressive power, were in Asia, to the east of the Araxes. Here they multiplied and extended their territorial limits, for some centuries, unknown to Europe. Their general appellation among themselves was Scoloti, but the Greeks called them Scythians[19], Scuthoi or Nomades.

[16] Many of the Icelandic sagas have been published by the northern literati, with Latin translations. I have accustomed myself to rely on the accuracy of these versions, but some passages of Mr. Thorkelin's late translation of Beowulf, lead me to recommend to the student an acquaintance with the original language. Peringskiold's catalogue of the sagas is printed in the pars altera of Hickes' Thesaurus.

[17] The continental writers have not so clearly distinguished the Keltic and Gothic nations as our own authors have done, but most frequently confuse the two races with each other, and sometimes with the Sarmatian nations.

[18] See before, p. 27.

[19] Herod. Melp. c. 5. 7. 6. 11. The wars of the Scythians before this period must have been with their Asiatic neighbours; but I think there is no credit to be given to the system of an ancient great or universal Scythic empire. The passage in Justin, which seems to warrant it, and for which I have no great respect, does not appear to me to be

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

To this judicious and probable account of Herodotus, we add the information collected by Diodorus. He says, that the Scythians, formerly inconsiderable and few, possessed a narrow region on the Araxes; but, by degrees, they became more powerful in numbers and in courage. They extended their boundaries on all sides; till at last they raised their nation to great empire and glory.[20]

One of their kings becoming valiant and skilful in the art of war, they added to their territory the mountainous regions about Caucasus, and also the plains towards the ocean, and the Palus Mæotis, with the other regions near the Tanais. In the course of time they subdued many nations, between the Caspian and the Mæotis, and beyond the Tanais. Thus, according to Diodorus, the nation increased, and had kings worthy of remembrance. The Sakai, the Massagetai, and the Arimaspoi, drew their origin from them.[21]

The Massagetai seem to have been the most eastern branch of the Scythian nation. Wars arising between them and the other Scythic tribes, an emigration from the latter took place according to the account which Herodotus selects, as in his opinion the most authentic[22], which occasioned their entrance into Europe. Such feuds and wars have contributed, more than any other

a sufficient foundation for it. His period of 1500 years I believe to be fabulous; and am much inclined to the supposition that xv has been confounded in the MS. of Justin for xv^{c}; and that, in consequence, fifteen hundred has been read instead of fifteen. The supposition of one great and early Scythian empire seems to me to have no foundation. See Coxe's Vindic. of the Celts, p. 14.

[20] Diod. Siculus, p. 127.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Herod. Melpom. s. 11.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

cause, to disperse through the world its uncivilised inhabitants.

Scythians enter Europe. 600—700 Ant. Chr.

THE emigrating Scythians crossed the Araxes, passed out of Asia, and invading the Kimmerians, suddenly appeared in Europe, in the seventh century before the Christian æra. Part of the Kimmerians flying into Asia Minor, some of the Scythian hordes pursued them; but, turning in a direction different from that which the Kimmerians traversed, they missed their intended prey, and fell unintentionally upon the Medes. They defeated the Medes, pressed on towards Egypt, and governed those parts of Asia for twenty-eight years, till Cyaxares, the king of Media, at last expelled them. [23]

THE Scythian tribes however continued to flock into Europe; and, in the reign of Darius, their European colonies were sufficiently numerous and celebrated to excite the ambition of the Persian monarch, after his capture of Babylon; but all his efforts against them failed. [24] In the time of Herodotus, they had gained an important footing in Europe. They seem to have spread into it, from the Tanais to the Danube [25], and to have then taken a westerly direction; but their kindred colonies, in Thrace, had extended also to the south. Their most northward ramification in Europe was the tribe of the Roxolani, who dwelt above the Borysthenes, the modern Dnieper. [26]

[23] Herod. Clio, s. 15. 103—106. It was at this period that Idanthyrgus, the Scythian king, overran Asia as far as Egypt. Strabo, 1007. At this time also occurred the expedition of Maduos, their king. Strabo, 106.

[24] Herod. Melpom.

[25] Ibid. Melp. s. 47—57

[26] Strabo says, "Above the Borysthenes dwell the last of the

Digitized by Google

It would be impertinent to the great subject of this history, to engage in a minuter discussion of the Scythian tribes. They have become better known to us, in recent periods, under the name of Getæ and Goths[27], the most celebrated of their branches.

As they spread over Europe, the Kimmerian and Keltic population retired towards the west and south. In the days of Cæsar, the most advanced tribes of the Scythian, or Gothic race, were known to the Romans under the name of Germans. They occupied all the continent but the Cimbric peninsula, and had reached and even passed the Rhine. One of their divisions, the Belgæ, had for some time established themselves in Flanders and part of France; and another body, under Ariovistus, were attempting a similar settlement near the centre of Gaul, which Cæsar prevented.[28] It is most probable that the Belgæ in Britain were descendants of

known Scuthoi, the Roxolanoi. The parts beyond them are uninhabitable from the cold." 175. He repeats this again. "If any live above the Roxolanoi we know not. They are the most northern, and inhabit the places between the Tanais (the Don), and the Borysthenes." p. 470.

[27] That the Getæ were Goths cannot be doubted. The Getæ were the same as the Daci, or, as they were more anciently called, Davi. Hence the Greek terms for slaves in their comedies, which Terence has borrowed, Geta and Davus. Strabo, lib. vii. 467. The Getæ used the same language with the Thracians, and the Greeks called them a Thracian nation: so does Menander. Strabo, p. 453—455. Ovid, who was banished to Tome, a town of Mysia, on the Euxine, frequently talks of his Getic and Scythic locality in his Epistles and Tristia. As he was so near the borders of the Sarmatians, it is a natural circumstance that their name is also mentioned in his verses; but this is no identification of nations whose origin was so distinct.

[28] These two facts are fully asserted by Cæsar. He expressly distinguishes the Kelts from the Belgians in Gaul, as differing in language, laws, and customs, and ascribes to the Belgians a German origin.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

colonists or invaders from the Belgæ in Flanders and Gaul.

THE names Scythians and Scoloti were, like Galli and Kimmerians, not so much local as generic appellations. The different tribes of the Scythians, like those of the Kimmerians and Gauls, had their peculiar distinctive denominations.

The Sakai-suna probably the Saxons.

THE Saxons were a German or Teutonic, that is, a Gothic or Scythian tribe; and of the various Scythian nations which have been recorded, the Sakai, or Sacæ are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons may be inferred, with the least violation of probability. Sakai-suna, or the sons of the Sakai, abbreviated into Saksun, which is the same sound as Saxon, seems a reasonable etymology of the word Saxon. The Sakai, who in Latin are called Sacæ, were an important branch of the Scythian nation. They were so celebrated, that the Persians called all the Scythians by the name of Sacæ; and Pliny, who mentions this, remarks them among the most distinguished people of Scythia. [29] Strabo places them eastward of the Caspian, and states them to have made many incursions on the Kimmerians and Treres, both far and near. They seized Bactriana, and the most fertile part of Armenia, which, from them, derived the name Sakasina; they defeated Cyrus; and they reached the Cappadoces on the Euxine.[30] This important fact of a part of Armenia having been named Sakasina, is mentioned by Strabo in another place[31]; and seems to give a geographical locality

[29] Pliny, lib. vi. c. 19. [30] Strabo, lib. xi. pp. 776. 778.

[31] Strab. p. 124. Mr. Keppel, in his late travels, calls this "the beautiful province of Karabaugh." In a letter to the Royal Literary Society, I have traced 262 words in the Persian, Zend, and Pehlvi languages, like as many in the Anglo-Saxon.

Digitized by Google

to our primeval ancestors, and to account for the Persian words that occur in the Saxon language, as they must have come into Armenia from the northern regions of Persia. CHAP. I.

THAT some of the divisions of this people were really called Saka-suna, is obvious from Pliny; for he says, that the Sakai, who settled in Armenia, were named Sacassani[32], which is but Saka-suna, spelt by a person unacquainted with the meaning of the combined words. And the name Sacasena[33], which they gave to the part of Armenia they occupied, is nearly the same sound as Saxonia. It is also important to remark, that Ptolemy mentions a Scythian people, sprung from the Sakai, by the name of Saxones. If the Sakai, who reached Armenia, were called Sacassani, they may have traversed Europe with the same appellation; which being pronounced by the Romans from them, and then reduced to writing from their pronunciation, may have been spelt with the x instead of the ks, and thus Saxones would not be a greater variation from Sacassani or Saksuna, than we find between French, François, Franci, and their Greek name, Φραγγι; or between Spain, Espagne, and Hispania.

IT is not at all improbable, but that some of these marauding Sakai, or Sacassani, were gradually propelled to the western coasts of Europe, on which they were found by Ptolemy, and from which they molested the Roman Empire, in the third century of our æra. There was a people called Saxoi, on the Euxine, according to Stephanus.[34]

[32] Pliny, lib. vi. c. 11.
[33] Strabo, lib. xi. pp. 776. 778.
[34] Stephanus de Urb. et Pop. p. 657.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

We may consider these also, as a nation of the same parentage; who, in the wanderings of the Sakai, from Asia to the German Ocean, were left on the Euxine, as others had chosen to occupy Armenia. We may here recollect the traditional descent of Odin preserved by Snorre in the Edda and his history. This great ancestor of the Saxon and Scandinavian chieftains is represented to have migrated from a city, on the east of the Tanais, called Asgard, and a country called Asaland, which imply the city and land of the Asæ or Asians. The cause of this movement was the progress of the Romans.[35] Odin is stated to have moved first into Russia, and thence into Saxony. This is not improbable. The wars between the Romans and Mithridates involved, and shook most of the barbaric nations in these parts, and may have excited the desire, and imposed the necessity of a westerly or European emigration.

Ancient Scythian language,

Of the ancient Scythian language, the probable parent of all the Gothic tongues, we have a few words preserved to us:

Exampaios	sacred ways.
Arima	one.
Spou	an eye.
Oior	a man.
Pata	to kill.
Groucasum	white with[36] snow.

and deities.

Of their gods, we learn that they had seven; whose character and attributes were thought, by

[35] Snorre Ynglinga Saga. c. 2. and 5.
[36] Herod. Melpom. s. 52. 28. 110. Pliny, lib. vi. c. 19.

Digitized by Google

Herodotus, to be like some of the most distinguished in the Grecian mythology: as, CHAP. I.

Tabiti, their principal deity, resembled the Greek	Vesta.
Papaios	Jupiter.
Oitosuros	Apollo.
Artimpasa, or Arippasa	Venus.
Thamimasadas	Neptune.
Apia, wife of Papaios	Earth.

They had also a warlike deity, like Mars, whose name has not been given to us; and to whom only they raised altars, images, and temples[37], and to whom they sacrificed annually horses and sheep, and a portion of their prisoners. Their bows were proverbial.[38] In battle they drank the blood of the first enemy whom they mastered. They scalped their opponents, and offered their heads to their king; and they made drinking vessels of the skulls of their greatest enemies or conquered friends. They had many diviners, who used rods of willow for their predictions.[39] In these customs our Gothic

[37] Herod. Melp. s. 59. Lucian tells us that they adored a sword, Jup. Trag., which Herodotus mentions as their emblem of Mars. Lucian also says, that, despising the Grecian worship as unworthy of the deity, they sacrificed men to their Diana, who delighted in human blood.

[38] "Like a Scythic bow." Strabo, 187.

[39] Her. s. 64, 65. 67. Strabo remarks, that they used skulls for their cups, lib. vii. p. 458. In the days of Herodotus their customs were sufficiently ferocious; but by the time that their branches, the Germans and Saxons, had pervaded Europe and attracted the attention of Tacitus, they had attained the improvements whose benefits we feel. How superior both they and the Kelts of Gaul were to the more savage and uncivilised tribes of America, we may perceive, by contrasting Tacitus's account of the Germans, with Brainerd's the Indian missionary's description of the North American Indians. Of these he says, "they are in general wholly unacquainted with civil

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

ancestors resembled them. They had the moral virtues of Nomadic nations. Eschylus mentions them with an epithet that implies their habits of social justice. Homer declares that no nation was more just than theirs; and Strabo asks where is the wonder of this, as they cared little for money or commerce, which he considers to be the fountains of civilised dishonesty.[40]

THE nations who entered Europe, after the Scythic or Gothic or Teutonic tribes, have been called Sclavonian or Sarmatian, forming a third great race who have appeared on the vast Germanic continent. The Sarmatian or Sclavonic branches have occupied Russia, Poland, Eastern Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, and their vicinity. As our ancient history is not connected with this race, it will be sufficient to remark, that they had reached the neighbourhood of the Tanais, on the borders of Europe, in the time of Herodotus, who calls them Sauromatæ.[41] This fact gives one solid basis for their just chronology. Herodotus lived 450 years before our æra; and thus he gives evidence of the existence and approach to Europe of the Sarmatian race at that period.

The Sclavonic.

THE Sclavonic is a genus of languages which

laws and proceedings; nor have any kind of notion of civil judicatures: of persons being arraigned, tried, judged, condemned or acquitted. They have little or no ambition or resolution. Not one in a thousand of them has the spirit of a man. They are unspeakably indolent and slothful. They discover little gratitude, or even manhood, amidst all the kindnesses they receive. They seem to have no sentiments of generosity, benevolence, or goodness." See Brainerd's Life by President Edwards. He died 1747.

[40] Strabo, 460, 461. 454.

[41] He says, the regions beyond the Tanais are no part of Scythia. The first portion belongs to the Sauromatæ. lib. iv. c. 21.

Digitized by Google

every examiner would separate from the Keltic and Gothic. The present Russian is thought to be the most faithful specimen of the original Sclavonic. The Poles, the Bohemians, the Dalmatians, the Croatians, the Bulgarians, Carinthians, Moravians, and some other tribes adjacent, formerly used its various dialects.[42] It prevailed in those parts of Europe where the ancients placed the Sarmatæ.[43] The numerous tribes who spoke the Sclavonic preserved their ancient name of Venedi, long after their invasion of Germany, in the fifth or sixth century, though they were also called Slavi. Their successes enabled them to reach the Saxons and the Francs, but their conquests were terminated by the opposition of Charlemagne, and their incessant civil feuds.

Their chronological succession.

THE incontrovertible fact, of the existence in ancient Europe of at least three genera of languages, strongly distinguished from each other, conducts us safely to the conclusion, that the collections of nations who spoke them, must have also differed in the chronology of their origin. As the Keltic tribes were found in the most western extremities of Europe, it is reasonable to infer that they visited it earlier than the others: so the Sclavonic peoples, being found to reside about its eastern boundaries, may be fairly considered as the latest

[42] The extent of the nationes Slavorum, and of their language, is stated by Helmoldus, Chron. Slav. p. 3.; by Krantz, in his Wandalia, p. 2.; by Chrytæus, Wandalia, p. 3.; by Munster, 1 Schard. Hist. Germ. 486.; and by Faber, Rer. Musc. 132. On the Slavi, see Spener's Notitia, ii. p. 384. Sunt a Germanis plane diversi generis. Pontanus, Chor. Dan. 710.

[43] Dubravii Hist. Bohem. 44. Helmoldus, p. 3., says, that the Hungarians nec habitu nec linguâ discrepant. But Krantz disputes his authority, and affirms, that all acknowledge the Hungarian and Sclavonic to be dissimilar languages. Wandalia, 36.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

settlers. The Gothic or Teutonic states, from their position, claim justly an intermediate date. As they advanced westwards, the Keltoi retired before them. As the ramifications of the Scythians, Saxons, and Goths spread toward the Germanic Ocean, the Sclavonic hordes flowed after them from Asia. The Saxon was one of the Gothic or Teutonic states, and it was as far west as the Elbe in the days of Ptolemy. The Saxons were therefore, in all likelihood, as ancient visitors of Europe as any other Gothic tribe. Their situation seems to indicate that they moved among the foremost columns of the second great emigration into Europe; but the particular date of their arrival on the Elbe, or a more particular derivation, it is impossible to prove, and therefore unprofitable to discuss.[44] The Poles became the most distinguished of the Sclavonian nations, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the Russian branch has since attained a pre-eminence, which, for power, influence, and extent of empire, transcends now, beyond all competition, every other people of the Sarmatian descent.[45]

[44] The most ancient nations of Italy and Greece, and those on the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Ægean Sea, and the Adriatic, appear to me to have sprung partly from Phœnician and Egyptian colonisations, and partly from the migrations of the Kimmerian and Keltic races. From this ancient population, secondary colonisations took place, like those which peopled Magna Græcia, and the north coast of the Euxine, and which settled at Marseilles. In their later population, the Gothic or Scythian tribes, as well as the Carthaginians, must have had some share. The most remarkable fact of the Latin language is, that although visibly of the same family with the Greek, yet it contains many striking resemblances, especially in its terminations, to the ancient Sanscrit. Meric Casaubon has taken some pains to show that the Saxon language has great affinity with the Greek. De Ling. Sax. 234—376.

[45] The old Russian chronicler, Nestor, has preserved to us the names of the seven chief Sclavonian deities, in those idols which Vladimir set up at Kiow, and destroyed as soon as he embraced

Digitized by Google

Christianity. They were Peroun, Veless, Stribog, Zimtserla, Khorss, Dajbog, and Makochd. Rousef's Idoles de Kief. A poem of the 12th century, intituled "Song on the exploits of Igor," mentions three of these, as Viley, Streb, and Dajbog. This poems speaks of the latter as the Mother of the Gods and Men. Ib. The greatest part of the ancient Russian MSS. were destroyed in the civil commotions of Bati and the false Demetrius; but it has been calculated that above 10,000 yet remain of those of the middle ages.

In the first edition of this history some of the fanciful derivations of the Saxons were noticed, which the learned of former times had patronised; and as the curious reader may wish to know the speculations which have been framed on this subject, the passage is reprinted here.

The Saxon antiquaries, like those of the other European states, formerly coveted a duration almost coeval with creation. To have appeared on the world but so recently as the second century of our æra was once thought such a national disgrace, that a succession of ancestors from the very deluge itself was ostentatiously sought for in a vainglorious emulation of the rest of mankind. The exact parent was not indeed determined, because the taste of our heralds has disagreed. Some preferred Magog[a], the grandson of Noah; many his grandson Gomer[b], and others were more partial to his great grandson Askenas.[c] With more ardent patriotism some ascended a little higher, in order to assert an origin which could not be surpassed. Hence Shem[d], the eldest of Noah's offspring, and Japhet[e], the youngest, have been also selected. But as the human mind delights in contradiction, the antediluvian sons of the antediluvian patriarch, however unexceptionable for their antiquity, were not honoured with an unanimous choice. It is the privilege immemorially assumed by an antiquary to exhibit his learning, and to indulge his caprice. Some of our annalists have felt this impulse, and the claims of Shem and Japhet were, in their minds, superseded by the merits of their brother Strefius.[f] It is true that this Strefius is a venerable person with whom Moses was unacquainted; but our more learned country-

[a] Wern. Rolevinck de Westphal. ant. Situ, p. 13., &c.

[b] Langhorn, who, to begin ab ovo, opens his Elenchus with an account of Adam and Eve, settles Gomer in Bactriana at first; but conveys him afterwards to Scythia Sacana, from which his posterity, spreading through Scythia intra Imaum, became divided into the Sasones and other tribes. Antiquit. Albion, xi. 326.

[c] This derivation is among those mentioned by Krantz, p. 4.; but Lazius de Gent. al. Migrat. p. 19., makes the Askenazians the people who were ejected by the Trojan Saxons.

[d] Asser Menev. p. 4., leads the pedigree of Alfred up to Shem, and to Adam. So others.

[e] Hist. Erphest. de 1 Rer. Germ. Pistori, 908., and others.

[f] William Malmsbury, 41. Strefius filius Noæ. Sim. Dum. adds, in archa natus. Præf. x. Script. Twysd. Langhorn Ant. Alb. 334., saw one MS. genealogy, which derives Strefius from Japhet. The Lanfedgatal, an Icelandic composition, interposes several generations between Strefius, when it names Seskef and Noah. 1 Langb. Scrip. Dan. p. 3.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

men discovered that he was born in the floating ark. We must excel each other in the length of our national as well as individual genealogy, or our spirit of competition will not be gratified, nor our envy appeased.

When the Saxon pedigree had been sufficiently guarded, a brilliant history was yet wanting to their glory. Some friendly pens supplied this defect. The defenders of Troy are immortal amongst mankind, and their fame led the erudition of some to perceive that the Saxons marched with the battalions of Priam.[g] But to be the children of vanquished fugitives was less palatable to others, and a destiny more glorious has been claimed for those whose posterity have filled Germany and Britain with their colonies. The triumphant Alexander was the general alone worthy to have led the ancient Saxons to the field of martial honour: they are stated to have followed him to the stream of victory, and on his death, to elude the envy excited by their exploits, to have exchanged the slothful plains of the East for the hardier soil of the Germanic continent. The Thuringians did not receive the heroes with the confidence they exacted, but fraud and violence soon extorted a country!![h]

In the sixteenth century, as true learning spread, these details were found to be warranted by no evidence, and fell into discredit; but as these disappeared, other suppositions, not less gratuitous, took their place. They were admitted to be neither Trojans nor Macedonians; they were Germans, indigenous Germans[i], polluted by no foreign race, and they were asserted to have been flourishing in arms and commerce above a thousand years before the Christian æra!! No claim of vanity could be bolder than this. They were active on the Elbe, the Weser, and the Ems[k] before, perhaps, these rivers had been at all disturbed by any human oars!

The effect of evidence on the mind is as various as the perceptions and associations of individuals. The authorities which were decisive

[g] Trithemius, in the name of Wasthald de Orig. Franc. p. 3. 64., exhibits the Saxons as a progeny of Trojans. Lazius also makes them part "of the fatal relics of the Trojan war," de Gent. Migrat. 19.

[h] This derivation was at one time the most popular. It is found in Wittichind Gest. Sax. p. 2., and was firmly believed by Gotfred. Viterb. 2 Pis. 361.

Saxo, velut credo, patria fuit ante Macedo,
Regis Alexandri miles ubique fuit.

The authors who have adopted this idea are very numerous. It is one of the facts on which the celebrated Agrippa founds his Philippic against History. De Van. Scient. p. 25.

[i] Many continental writers affirm this. Among these is Bebelius, a man of merit; but whose learning and eloquence were too partially pressed into the service of his patriotism. He discovers his ancient Germans not only to have been valiant, but perpetually victorious; not only to have possessed mind, strength, beauty, and integrity, but superior mind, strength, beauty, and an integrity unparalleled in the world. See his tract in 1 Schard. Hist. Germ. 256—286.

[k] Krantz (Saxonia, p. 5.) was betrayed into this mistake by accrediting the reveries of Saxo Grammaticus, of which Chrytæus says truly "poetica magis quam historica fide scripta temporum etiam, ut tota ipsius historia, distinctione accurate carent." Saxonia Proemium.

Digitized by Google

in the estimation of one scholar were light as 'chaff' in the judgment of another. When once the origin of the Saxons was submitted to investigation, conjecture began to unfold its plumes, and soared in devious flights through the dark expanse of historical erudition.

No principle of judgment governed its exertions: men were only solicitous to be singular; and if the opinion were but novel, its extravagance was overlooked. Hence the Cimbri [l], the Chauci [m], and the Suevi [n], or, as other advocates prevailed, the Boii [o], the Suardones [p], and the Catti [q], were declared to be identical with the Saxon nation. The proofs of the affinity of either were indeed invisible, as the whimsical selection and casual belief of the writers were the only authorities by which they were supported. It was the same sort of authentication, combined with the grossest ignorance of the transactions of nations, which induced two authors, who from their proximity both in time and place to the Saxon emigration, ought to have supplied the most authentic information, to derive this people from the very island which they invaded. [r] Others, seduced by the vicinity of situation, have discerned their parents in the Danes and Northmen; and an author, even of our own period, has thought the Vandals of Scandinavia [s] to have juster claims to this honour than all the rest.

But those antiquarians, whose narrow views looked only into Europe for the cradle of our ancestors, may be despised as indolent by the adventurous spirits who have made Asia and Africa the

[l] Aventinus Ann. Boiorum, p. 388., and Sheringham de Orig. Angl. 45., one of the most learned and intelligent of our antiquaries.

[m] See Glareanus and Althamerus in 1 Schard. Hist. Ger. 187. 48.

[n] Bebelius, 1 Schard. 241.

[o] Eneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II.), in his Historia Bohemica, c. 1. p. 3., says, the Saczania is one of the rivers which the Multavia receives. The episode annexed to this was, that such of the Galli Boii as were driven over the Saczania were denominated Saxons. Krantz. Sax. p. 3.

[p] Langhorn's Antiq. Alb. 333. intimates the Suardones of Tacitus to be the Saxon name distorted by negligent transcribers; because Saxones might easily slip into Sardones, and that into Suardones.

[q] This is the favourite idea of Krantz (Saxon, p. 4.), which Reineccius denominates fœdum errorem. Præf. to Wittichind. Chrytæus admits that it seemed durior et alienior aliis eruditis. Proem.

[r] Meginhard delivers it with an ut tradit antiquitas. Vita S. Alexandri, 2 Langb. Scrip. Dan. 39. He wrote about 870. Adam of Bremen, in the eleventh century, repeated the derivation on his authority, and quotes him, p. 4., under the name of Eginhard. Until lately he has been confounded with the biographer of Charlemagne. His work was thought lost. Fabr. Bibl. Medii Ævi, l. 5. p. 264. It was fancied to have been a curious history of the Saxons. It has been found to be but the life of a saint, containing no more about the Saxons than what Adam has extracted into his Hist. Eccl.

The chronicle of Conrad, which Melancthon published with commendations, repeats the story. Abb. Usper. Chron. p. 145.

[s] Macpherson's Introduction to the History of Great Britain, p. 291. 12° ed. The Danish origin had been started before by Wittichind. See this ancient author, p. 2. Leibnitz inclined to it.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

regions of their research. So indefatigable has been the activity of some, that the Pontic Chersonesus has been visited [t], the classic Euxine navigated [u], Armenia traversed [v], and Mount Imaus approached. [w] Wherever the chorographical polemic has turned his eye, this fairy people have appeared. Distance has been no difficulty; impossibility no impediment; but the bleak deserts of Scythia [x], and the sands of Africa [y], have alike been presented to us as the birthplace of that tribe, which in the days of Ptolemy just darkened the neck of the peninsula of Jutland, and three inconsiderable islands in its neighbourhood.

A contemporary of our own, whose talents and industry deserve more applause than his judgment, has taken a flight on this subject which is peculiarly eccentric. His genius, disdaining the prudence which would dictate hesitation amid obscurity so impenetrable, has set both chronology and geography at defiance. He finds the Saxons in almost all parts of Europe, and in almost all ages; at one time marauding in Europe as Celto-Scythæ, intimidating the Romans as Ambrones from Liguria, afterwards peeping out to Lucan in the name of Axones, then settling in Gaul in the character of Suessiones, and at last haunting the natives of the British isles in the terrific shape of the Lochlynach; it was in vain that the Celtic Protæi shifted their disguises; the historian of Manchester detected them in all! [z] An illustrious instance that imagination may be as active in the dullest and darkest as in its most bright and congenial themes.

[t] M. Casaubon de Ling. Sax. 393. The modesty of Casaubon entitles him to respect: "In hac tanta et ipsarum rerum obscuritate et opinionum varietate, non meum neque fortasse cujusquam vel diligentissimi quicquam certe statuere."

[u] Capnio and others supposed the Axones on the Euxine to have been the Saxons. Cisner's preface to Krantz Sax. and M. Casaub. 392. Capnio contends the Saxones of Ptolemy should be read Ἀξονες.

[v] The Chronicon Holsatiæ says, that Alexander found in Armenia a hardy race of men, who partook of all his expeditions, and whose name, from their valour, he changed into Saxones, from saxum, a rock. Leibnitz Access. Histor. 12.

[w] Beyond the Jaxartes, according to Strabo, and opposite to the Sogdiani, according to Eratosthenes, and half enclosed by the mountains of Ascatanea and Imaus, according to Ptolemy, were the Sacæ. It was the opinion formerly of almost all the learned, that from these the Saxons descended. Cisner Præf. Camden favours it. This position is that which we have before mentioned as the most probable seat of our ancestors in Asia, if they have really sprung from the Sacæ.

[x] North of the Sacæ, and near the Syebian and Tapurian mountains, Ptolemy has placed another people, the Sasones. These have been selected as our ancestors. Krantz Saxonia, 2. This opinion has been united with the former. Sasones, Sacæsons, Sacsones, Saxones. Cisner Præf.

[y] Verstegan quotes Occa Scarlensis for this derivation. Suffridus Petri has courageously undertaken the defence of Occa's veracity, Apol. pro Ant. Fris. Hist. p. 180. I wonder no one has thought of the Saxoi, near the Pontus, according to Stephanus, or the Saxinæ, who were some troglodytes in Ethiopia, according to Pliny. Ortelius Thesaur. Geograph. in voc.

[z] Hist. Manch. i. p. 427.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

Description of the Country inhabited by the SAXONS *near the* ELBE, *before they occupied* BRITAIN.

CHAP. II.

THE infant state of the Saxon people, when the Romans first observed them, exhibited nothing from which human sagacity would have predicted greatness. A territory, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, and three small islands, contained those whose descendants occupy the circle of Westphalia, the electorate of Saxony, the British islands, the United States of North America, and the British colonies in the two Indies. Such is the course of Providence, that empires the most extended, and the most formidable, are found to vanish as the morning mist; while tribes scarce visible, or contemptuously overlooked, like the springs of a mighty river, often glide on gradually to greatness and veneration.

Saxon islands.

THE three islands which the Saxons in the days of Ptolemy inhabited, were those which we now denominate North Strandt, Busen, and Heiligland.[1]

North Strandt.

NORTH STRANDT, formerly torn from South Jutland by the violence of the waves, is situated oppo-

[1] Cluver. Ant. Ger. iii. p. 97. Pontanus Chorog. 737. Du Bos Histoire Critique, i. p. 148. The geographer of Ravenna places Eustrachia among the Saxon isles, lib. v. c. 30. This may mean the neighbouring peninsula, Eyderstadt, which was almost an island.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

site to Hesum, and above Eiderstede, from both which it is separated by intervals of sea. The Hever, a bay which flows below it, and washes the northern shore of the Eiderstede, is favourable to commercial navigations. This island was formerly about twenty miles long, and in most parts seven miles broad. It once contained twenty-two parishes, and was noted for its agricultural produce, as well as its fish.[2] The raging of the sea has materially damaged it since the time of the Saxons. Four calamitous inundations are recorded to have happened, in 1300, 1483, 1532, and 1615; but the most destructive of all began in the night of the 11th October, 1634; the island was entirely overflowed; 6408 persons, 1332 houses, and 50,000 head of cattle were washed away into the [3] sea. Such devastations have almost annihilated the place. There is now remaining of Nord-strand only the small parish of Pelworm, which derives its safety from the height of its situation.

Busen.

BUSEN lies north of the mouth of the Elbe, to the westward of Ditmarsia, and looks towards Meldorp; in breadth, it is above two miles, in length near three. It is situated close upon the main land, of which it is suspected to have once formed a part. Being one even plain, the stormy ocean around makes the island a perilous habitation; it has therefore been surrounded by a strong dyke. It contains three or four parishes, with about as many villages; and though boasting no pre-emi-

[2] Chrytæus, 65. Pontanus, p. 741. Ubbo Emmius, p. 30. 158.

[3] The destruction extended to other parts of Jutland. In the Eyderstede, 664 houses, 2107 persons, and 12,000 cattle and sheep were swept off. Busching's Geography.

Digitized by Google

nence of soil, it commonly yields its produce with moderate fertility.[4]

Heiligisland.

But the most celebrated and the most frequented of the Saxon islands was Heiligisland. The word literally means 'the sacred island.'[5] In the eighth century, and in the eleventh, it had two other names; Fossetis-land[6], and Farria, which have been written with various orthography.

This ancient seat of our forefathers has now become united to the British dominions.[7] As it was the principal station of their naval excursions, it is peculiarly interesting to us, and an important object of our national history. But its condition has greatly varied: we will therefore subjoin its earliest, as well as its subsequent and latest descriptions, to give the reader the fullest information of its successive states that can now be obtained.

In the eighth century it is noticed by a writer as the place where the idol Fosete was adored.[8] In the eleventh century, it is thus described by Adam of Bremen, under the name of Farria. "It

[4] Ubbo Emmius, Rer. Fris. p. 31. Pontanus, Chorog. 737, 738. and 741. He derives its name from Buysen, or Busch, a wood. His vernacular names of the fishes, with their Latin names of that day, are in p. 741.

[5] Some derive the name from Hilgo, a bishop of the place; others, and in the opinion of Pontanus, verior, from some holy virgins who inhabited it. Their sacred steps the respectful grass never covered, as all the credulous natives will attest and show!! Pontanus, Chorog. 739. But as an idol much revered, called Foseti, was in it, the epithet perhaps arose from the Pagan superstition.

[6] Altf. vita St. Lieudg. ap. Bouquet, t. V. p. 449. This ancient name of the island and its Idol seems to connect them with the Fosi of Tacitus.

[7] On 26th August, 1814, the King of Denmark signed an official act, announcing his cession of this island to the crown of Great Britain. It had been annexed to Denmark in 1714. It was formerly possessed by the dukes of Holstein Gottorf.

[8] See note 6.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

lies in a long recess at the mouth of the Elbe. It is the first island that occurs in the ocean. It has a monastery and is inhabited. It is very fruitful: rich in corn, and a nurse of cattle and birds. It has one hill and no trees: it is surrounded with the steepest rocks, with only a single entrance, where there is fresh water. It is a place venerated by all sailors, and especially by pirates. Hence it is called Heiligeland."[9]

Its state about 1630, we take from Pontanus. "It had formerly seven parishes, and from its inhabitants and incidents, we learn, that it was once much larger than it is at present. For in our times the sea receding, the soil has been worn down and carried off on all sides by the violence of the waves. It is thirty-two miles from Eyderstadt, and about thirty-six from the Elbe. On the west, opposite England, it is 46 ells high, and towards the Elbe 30. They who have examined its shores, report that solid bodies formed of stone, and that shells, oysters, and human hands, have been found there, and even books and candles. Its banner is a ship in full[10] sail." He adds another description from its Governor, which is translated in the note.[11]

[9] Ad. Bren. Hist. c. 210. p. 64. ed. Linden.

[10] Pontan. Chorog.

[11] "The island consists of two rocks, one red, the other white. The first, containing the fortress and garrison of the place, can be ascended by only one path. Like a red mulberry it emerges straight up from the sea like Segeburg in Holsatia, 406 ells high, with a rich and fertile soil upon it, from two ells and a half to one ell deep. It bears pease, beans, and English barley, of such peculiar goodness, that two bushels of it excel three of Eyderstadt. It has lettuces, radishes, and spinage, and is free from serpents, toads, and every venomous animal. It has fine cattle and horses, but their motions must be restricted or they fall into the sea. The air is pure and salubrious. It has a church, 50 families, and about 300 inhabitants, an industrious and healthy race, skilled in navigation, and rich, and

Digitized by Google

THE occupations of its inhabitants have generally been those of the fisherman and the pilot. Perpetually at sea, like their Saxon ancestors, they disregard the terrors of the ocean. Their food consists of their oats and the produce of their nets. But though sacred in human estimation, the elements have not respected this island. In the year 800, a furious tempest from the north-west occasioned the greater portion to be swallowed up by the waves. In 1300 and 1500 it suffered materially from the same cause; but the inundation of 1649 was so destructive, that but a small part of the island survived it.[12] If another attack should wash away the sandy downs, scarce one sixth of the present population could subsist.

SITUATED near nations highly civilised, this island exists for the benefit of all who navigate the Elbe, which, from its dangerous coast, could not

advancing themselves in other regions to wealth and dignities. The rock abounds with birds, of whom incredible numbers fly hither in crowds every autumn, especially cranes, swans, geese, ducks, thrushes, larks, and others, which supply the inhabitants with many banquets. They detain and use rain water. It has a safe and capacious port, very deep and open to the south. This sometimes holds above 100 ships of burthen, and defends them from the north and west winds. Larger ships may find a shelter in it. The other white rock is sandy, and has springs of fresh water. It has rabbits: it affords no pasture, but it grows hemp. It has towards the north and east a metal like gold, which they call mummergoldt, from which gold may be extracted, and sulphur enough to pay the expense of the smelting. Petrified almonds and wax-candles are found in its veins in abundance, and snails and shells converted into the metallic gold. There are small metallic branches, as of trees, so fine, that no artificer could make such of gold. The island was formerly famous for the capture of herrings, and now abounds with fish, especially oysters." Pont. Chorog. p. 739, 740. As gold is seldom found united with sulphur, auriferous pyrites are very rare, though some have been found in Peru, Siberia, Sweden, and Hungary.

[12] Busching's Geog. vol. i.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

be entered without it. A sea-mark by day, a lighthouse by night, Heiligland points out the path of safety to the anxious mariner, and abounds with skilful pilots, who possess the local knowlege which he needs. They conduct vessels to the Elbe, the Weser, the Eider, or the Hever. But though now so useful to the navigator, it was anciently an object of terror. Its safe harbour, so contiguous to many marts of wealth and industry, long invited to it the adventurous pirate. From the age of the Saxons almost to our own, it has been thronged with maritime depredators.[13] It is a subject of geographical contest, whether it be the Actania of Pliny, and the island of the Castum Nemus of Tacitus.[14]

THE latest account of this curious island which has appeared, is that of an intelligent traveller who visited it in 1805, from which it appears, that its population has increased.[15] Connected now with

[13] It has been often the seat of a royal residence. Radbodus, king of Frisia, had his last sovereignty upon it. See Ubbo Emmius, p. 52. The Sea-kings also frequented it. But this island has been often confounded with Helgoland, a populous district of Norway, which is mentioned in Ohther's voyage, Alfred's Orosius, 24.; and in Sir Hugh Willoughby's voyage, Hackluyt, p. 268.; and of which the kings of Helgoland, mentioned in the Norwegian Chronicle, were kings. Pont.

[14] See Pontanus, 665. 737. — Cluverius gives Heiligland as Actania; and Rugen, from its wood and lake, as the island designated by Tacitus, Ant. Germ. 107. 97. — Heiligland has no woods. Pontanus, while he hints the pretensions of Zealand, seems to prefer Heiligland, because it is near the Elbe, and is almost a translation of castum nemus.

[15] Dr. Adam Neale, in his travels, states, "The present inhabitants amount to about two thousand souls. The men gain their subsistence by fishing and pilotage, while the women tend the flocks of sheep and cows, and cultivate the soil, which produces little more than barley and oats. The communication between the cliff and the downs is carried on by means of a broad wooden staircase fixed in the rock, which is red breccia. There are three wells of fresh water, but scarcely a shrub

Digitized by Google

the trade and interests of Great Britain, its prosperity will augment with our commerce, and from its local utility as a safe point of intercourse between England and the Continent, its importance can no longer be under-valued.—The island of Nieuwerk, at the very mouth of the Elbe, is a mere sand, with a beacon to guide the course of the approaching mariner.

Their continental territory.

THE territory which the original Saxons occupied on the Continent, was situated on the western side of the Cimbric peninsula, between the Elbe and the Eyder. This latter river is the boundary of Denmark, and has always been understood to mark the termination of the German states.[16] It rises from a district which was anciently a forest; and from Borsholm, passing Keil and Rensberg, it continues its course into the British Ocean below Eiderstadt.

THE region between the Eyder and the Elbe was denominated Nordalbingia, and its inhabitants Nordalbingi, in the earliest records we possess of these parts.[17] North of the Eyder, extended Sleswick, in South Jutland; and, beyond that, the district of North Jutland was continued into Wendila, and ended in Skawen, from which in a clear atmosphere the rocks of Scandinavia are visible.

THREE districts, in ancient times, divided this

or tree of any kind in the island; and turf, wood, fruit, and garden vegetables, are brought from Cuxhaven and Hamburg, in exchange for the fish with which the hardy Heligolanders supply these towns."

[16] Saxo Gram. Preface, p. 2. Svaningius, in Steph. Comm. in Sax. p. 16.

[17] Ad. Brem. p. 63. — The Privilegia, Eccl. Hammb. 146, 147. — Helmoldus Chron. Slav. 40. — Some name the people Transalbini.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

country of Nordalbingia or Eald [18] Saexen. These unequal portions, which have preserved their names to recent times, are Ditmarsia, Stormaria, and Holsatia. The progress of the Slavi occasioned a fourth division in the province of Wagria. As the early state of all distinguished nations is a curious subject of contemplation, it may not be uninteresting to add a short account of the provinces which our ancestors, when first noticed, occupied on the Continent.

Ditmarsia.

DITMARSIA [19] is separated on the north from Sleswick by the Eyder, and from Stormaria on the south by the Stoer. It fronts the isles of Heiligland and Busen, and extends in length one hundred and forty-eight miles, and in breadth ninety-two. Its general aspect is a soil low and marshy, and strong mounds are necessary to keep the ocean to its natural limits. The land on the coast is favourable to corn and cattle; but in the interior appear sterile sands, or uncultivated marshes. Its inhabitants, like those of all unfruitful regions, have been tenacious of the right of enjoying their poverty in independence, and the nature of the country has favoured their military exertions. Their habits of warfare and scanty livelihood produced a harshness of disposition, which often amounted to ferocity.[20]

BELOW Ditmarsia, and reaching to the Elbe,

[18] So Alfred, in his Orosius, p. 20, 21., and his kinsman Ethelwerd, 833., entitle this region. The three divisions exist in Ad. Brem. 22., and Helmoldus Slav. 40. Subsequent geographers acknowledge it.

[19] It is called Thiat mares-gaho in S. Anscharius, who lived in 840, and in whose work the name is first met with. 1 Langb. Script. 347. Thiatmaresca, in a diploma of 1059, ib.; and Thiatmarsgoi, in Ad. Brem. 22.—Teutomarsia, Chryteus Proem.—Also Dythmersi, Dytmerschi. — Suhm has investigated the etymology in his Nordfolk. Oprin. 263.

[20] Pontanus, ch. 667. — Cilicius Belli Ditmars. 427., annexed to Krantz. — Their banner was an armed soldier on a white horse.

Digitized by Google

was STORMARIA.[21] The Stoer, which named the province, confined it on the north. The Suala, Trave, and Billa, determined the rest of its extent. It was almost one slimy marsh. The wet and low situation of Stormaria and Ditmarsia exactly corresponds with the Roman account of the Saxons living in inaccessible marshes.[22] The Stoer is friendly to navigation and fishing. Stormaria is somewhat quadrangular, and its sides may be estimated at one hundred and thirty-two miles.[23] Stormaria.

DIVIDED from Sleswick by the Levesou on the north, bounded by Wagria on the east, and by the Trave on the south[24], HOLSATIA stretches its numerous woods to Ditmarsia. The local appellation of the region thus confined has been, by a sort of geographical catachresis, applied to denominate all that country which is contained within the Eyder, the Elbe, and the Trave. In the age approaching the period of the continental residence of our ancestors, the Holtzati were nominally as well as territorially distinguished from the other states which we have considered.[25] Their country received from Holsatia.

[21] Ad. Brem. p. 22. derives the name from Storm, a metaphor expressive of the seditions of the inhabitants; but Stoer, the river, and Marsi, the residents in marshes, seem to compose a juster etymology. Chryteus Sax. 66. — Pont. 664.

[22] Saxones, gentem in oceani littoribus et paludibus inviis sitam. Orosius, 7. 32.

[23] Pontanus, 666. — Ad. Brem. 22. distinguishes the Sturmarii with the epithet nobiliores. Their banner was a white swan with a golden collar. Hammaburg (Hamburg) was their metropolis, which, before the eleventh century, had been viris et armis potens: but in Adam's time, was in solitudinem redacta. Ib.

[24] Holsatia was 168 miles from Wilster to Kiel, and about 132 from Hanrahuw to New Munster. Pontan. 665.

[25] Their etymology has been variously stated; 1. from the woods they inhabited; Holt, a wood; saten, to be seated. Ad. Brem. and Pontan. — 2. From their country having been called Olt Saxen, Old Saxony. Shering, De Gent. Angl. 28. It certainly was so named

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

the bounty of nature one peculiar characteristic. As the western and southern coasts of Eald Saexen were repetitions of quagmires, the loftier Holsatia presented a continued succession of forests, and of plains which admitted cultivation.

STRENGTH and courage were qualities which grew up with the Holsatian, in common with his neighbours; he has been proverbed for his fidelity; his generosity has been also extolled; but an ancient writer diminishes the value of this rare virtue, by the companions which he associates to it. "They are emulous in hospitality, because to plunder and to lavish is the glory of an Holsatian; not to be versed in the science of depredation is, in his opinion, to be stupid and base." [26]

SUCH were the countries in which our Saxon ancestors were residing when the Roman geographer first noticed them; and from these, when the attention of their population became directed to maritime depredations, they made those incursions on the Roman empire, which its authors mention with so much dismay. But the Saxons were one of the obscure tribes whom Providence selected and trained to form the nobler nations of France, Germany, and England, and they have accomplished their distinguished destiny.

by Ravenna, Geog. lib. v. s. 31. So in Bede, lib. i. c. 15. and lib. v. c. 11. Chron. Sax. p. 13. By Gregory, Ep. Bib. Mag. v. 16. p. 101., and Boniface, ib. p. 55., who lived in the seventh century. Nennius, 3 Gale Script. Angl. 115. — 3. See another derivation in Verstegan, 91. Eginhard, in the ninth century, names it Holdunstetch. The derivation of Adam of Bremen has prevailed.

[26] Helmoldus, Chron. Slav. 40. He adds, that the three people of Nordalbingia differed little either in dress or language. They had the jura Saxonum.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Circumstances favourable to the Increase of the SAXON *Power on the Continent.*

CHAP. III.

ABOVE a century elapsed after Ptolemy, before the Saxons were mentioned again by any author who has survived to us. Eutropius is the second writer we have, who noticed them. In accounting for the rebellion of Carausius, and his assumption of the purple, he states the Saxons to have united with the Francs, and to have become formidable to the Romans for their piratical enterprises. In the century which elapsed between Ptolemy and Carausius, the Saxons had greatly advanced in power and reputation, and they were beginning their system of foreign depredations, when that emperor encouraged them to pursue it. Their prosperity during this interval seems to have arisen from the repulse of the Romans from the Elbe to the Rhine; from the rise of the Francs; and from their own application to maritime expeditions.

Progress of the Romans to the Elbe.

THE descendants of the first Scythian population of Europe had acquired the name of Germans in the time of Cæsar. That it was a recent appellation, we learn from Tacitus.[1] They were first invited into Gaul, to assist one of its contending factions, and the fertility of the country was so tempting, that their 15,000 auxiliaries gradually

[1] Tacitus, Mor. Germ. c. 2.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

swelled into 120,000 conquerors[2], who established themselves in the northern provinces. Cæsar defeated them with great destruction; but he admits that France, from the Rhine to the Seine and Marne, was peopled by German tribes, differing from the Kelts in language, laws, and customs, little civilized, averse from trade, but excelling in bravery.[3]

THE same insuppressible love of distinction and adventure which led Cæsar into Britain, actuated him to an invasion of Germany. He resolved to pass the Rhine, that he might show them that the Romans could both dare and accomplish the attempt.[4] He was offered ships; but he chose to construct a bridge, as better suited to the dignity of the Roman nation.[5] He crossed the Rhine, burnt the towns and villages of one tribe, alarmed others; and after staying eighteen days in the country, returned to France[6], and made his first incursion into Britain. In a subsequent year, he entered Germany again by a temporary bridge; but the natives retiring to their woods, he thought it dangerous to pursue them, and left a garrison on the Rhine.[7] He used some German auxiliaries against the Gauls; and was materially benefited by a charge of German horse, in his great battle at Pharsalia.[8] His vast project of entering and subduing Germany from the Euxine has been already noticed.

YET Cæsar had but shown Germany to the Romans, as he had led them to the knowlege of

[2] So one of the Keltic princes told Cæsar, lib. i. c. 23. In combating these Germans, the Eduari of Gaul, a Keltic race, had lost almost all their nobility, senate, and cavalry.

[3] Cæsar, lib. ii. c. 1. lib. i. c. i.

[4] Cæsar, lib. iv. c. 13. [5] Ib. c. 15. [6] Ib. c. 16. c. 17.

[7] Cæsar, lib. vi. c. 27. [8] Florus.

Digitized by Google

Britain. It was the succeeding reign of Augustus, which was the actual æra of the establishment of the Roman power in Germany, as that of Claudius afterwards introduced it into our island. The reign of Augustus was, therefore, as important in its consequences to the Barbaric as it was to the Roman mind. It spread an intellectual cultivation through the outer circle of his civilized empire, superior to that which its varying provinces had before enjoyed; and it began the improvement of the German intellect and society, by adding to the principles, customs, and spirit of the Barbaric continent, whatever its uncivilized tribes could successively imbibe, of the literature and arts of the Roman world. The Germans had much, which the wild savages of the New World have been found without, and in which even the Romans were deficient, for they had some of the noblest principles of social polity and morals; but they had scarcely any literature, few arts, few luxuries, and no refinement. When these became united to their own nobility of spirit and political principles, kingdoms arose in many parts of Europe, whose peoples have far transcended those of the Grecian states, and of the Roman empire.

Under Augustus, Gaul, or France was completely reduced to Roman provinces; and most of its natives adopted the Roman appearance, language, and modes of life, and polity. Many colonies of the Romans were planted both in France and Spain, each a little image of Rome[9]; and the natives assisted him to subdue the Germans.

[9] Thus *Thoulouse* became famous both for its great temple to Pallas, which Strabo mentions, l. 4., and also Martial, l. 9. ep. 10., and for its rhetorical schools, where Sidonius remarks that Theodoric was educated. Budæus, p. 39. 41. This city became afterwards celebrated for its floral games of eloquence and poetry. Tacitus

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

THE country between Gaul and the Rhine was also subdued into Roman provinces, and roads were constructed in every part. Eight of these were made in Belgium, diverging from a single town. All these parts were formed into two grand divisions, called Germania Prima, and Germania Secunda.

CASTLES and forts were built all along the Rhine, nearly fifty, and chiefly on its left bank, over which several bridges were thrown. A whole nation, the Ubii, was transplanted from beyond the Rhine to live along its left side: a Roman colony was placed among them, which increased afterwards into the city of Cologne. Other towns, as Mentz, Bonn, Worms, and Spires, arose from Roman stations. Eight legions were divided and placed in the most commanding spots to watch and overawe the Germans; and Augustus expressed and cultivated so strong an attachment to this people, that he had a body of Germans for his guard.

THUS the Reign of Augustus completely reduced all the regions up to the Rhine into the condition of Roman provinces: all within that boundary were debilitated into a state of subjection of peaceful life, and of beginning civilization.[10]

praises the liberal studies at *Autun*, whose schools in Diocletian's time were destroyed by the Bagaudæ, but restored by Constantius. Apollo was worshipped there, ib. p. 25. *Narbonne* became also distinguished. The inscription which has been found there is a complete instance of the Roman deification and adoration of their emperor. It orders sacrifices to Augustus, and appoints the days of the worship, ib. p. 34. *Bourdeaux* was repeatedly the theme of the panegyric of Ausonius. Sidonius praises the schools at *Auvergne* and *Lyons*. Others are noticed, as *Triers* and *Besançon*.

[10] It was most probably from the new policy adopted by Augustus, and from its effects, and with a complimentary reference to it, that Virgil penned the celebrated lines, which, conceding to Greece

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

THE natives immediately beyond the Rhine stretching to the ancient country of our ancestors, were the Batavi, in the present Holland; the Frisii, in Friesland; the Bructeri, towards the Ems; the Catti, and the Cherusci, who extended to the Weser; and the Chauci, who inhabited the shores from the Weser to the Elbe; while the Suevi spread from the Main to the Danube. The German nations nearest to the Rhine frequently passed it in the reign of Augustus, to attack the stations of the Romans; and these as willingly crossed the same river to defeat, plunder, and ravage, as far as they could penetrate.

AUGUSTUS often visited these parts of Germany; but operated more decisively on its southern regions. From the progress of his legions, the southern part, from the Alps to the Danube, became a Roman province, under the name of Noricum; and two other contiguous provinces, called Rhetia and Vindelicia, were also established from the Alps to the Rhine, the Inn, and the Adige.[11] The capital of Vindelicia was the present Augsburg, which Tacitus then called a most splendid colony. The Roman dominion being thus established in the southern district of Germany, the Emperor's son-in-law, Drusus, felt and cherished the same spirit

the superiority in arts and eloquence, called thus upon Rome to subdue the world to a state of social tranquillity.

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane! memento.
> Hæ tibi erunt artes: *pacisque imponere morem:*
> Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos. Æn. L. 6. 851.

Augustus fulfilled this admonition of Anchises. He fought to pacify, and ruled to civilize. Every Roman before him had warred for power, fame, and destruction; disturbing, not harmonizing the world.

[11] Tacitus.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

of ambitious but unjust enterprise which had incited Cæsar; projected the conquest of the whole Continent, and actually began it. A passage in Tacitus displays the insatiable thirst of distinction, with which the active-minded youths of Rome were urged upon expeditions incompatible with the comforts of the rest of mankind. Drusus crossed the Rhine from Holland, and ravaged around to the Main, while a fleet navigated along the coast into the Zuyderzee, and the Ems. In the ensuing spring he penetrated to the Weser, and in another year to the Elbe; laying the country waste, and building forts on the Maese, the Rhine, the Weser, and the Elbe; but before he passed that river he suddenly received, from natural causes, the fate which he was unsparingly dealing to others. Tiberius succeeded to the station, though not to the abilities of Drusus. He moved several times into Germany. In one year he passed the Weser; and in another, attacking the Chauci and Langobardi, he waved the imperial standards over the Elbe. His fleets triumphantly sailed up the river: he contemplated the collected warriors who lined its northern bank; but hazarded no attack.[12] Two of the princes of the Cherusci served in the Roman army; of whom one became the celebrated Arminius, and another, a Roman priest.

Tiberius was called by other wars to the Danube; and while he was there conflicting with the

[12] Dion. Cassius, p. 622—628., and the authors in Mascou's learned history of the Germans, i. p. 78—85. He has selected and arranged the most important passages of the classical authors concerning the transactions and movements of the German nations before the dissolution of the Roman empire. The authorities for most of the events alluded to in this chapter will be found in his work.

Digitized by Google

Marcomanni and their allies, the avarice of Quintilius Varus, combined with his precipitate attempt to civilize them, provoked the Germans of the Rhine to rebel. Arminius stood forward as the champion of Germany; and by his skill and exertions, the Roman general and his army were destroyed. This misfortune struck Rome with consternation, and the horrors of an invasion like that of the Cimbri and Teutones, were anticipated; but Arminius was contented to have merited the title of the deliverer of his country.[13] He had either not the means or the desire to pursue schemes of offensive conquest or of vengeful devastation beyond the precincts of Germany. He drove back the Roman empire from the Weser to the Rhine. He restored to his countrymen the possession of their native soil up to the latter river; destroyed all the Roman forts on the Ems, the Weser, and the Saal; and when Tiberius hastened to relieve the capitol from its dismay, the imperial general could gain no decisive laurels from the cautious patriot.[14] Thus Arminius raised Germany

[13] Tacitus gives him this title, Ann. lib. ii. c. 88. Kenler calls him the leader of the Saxons. 1 Schard. H. G. 501.; but he was of the Cherusci. Spen. Not. 297. His character in Paterculus is interesting; "Juvenis genere nobilis, manu fortis, sensu celer, ultra promptus ingenio, ardorem animi vultu oculisque preferens." He had served in the Roman armies, and obtained the equestrian dignity. The pen of Tacitus has completed his fame. For the disaster of Varus, see Dion. Cass. 667., Paterc. ii. c. 117.; and Tac. Ann. lib. i.

[14] There is a history of Arminius by Kenler, 1 Schard. p. 501—518. In the dialogue on his military merit by Hutt, ib. 426., the German prince says to Hannibal, with some truth, "Nam eorum qui res preclaras gesserunt, nemo majoribus difficultatibus enisus, aut gravioribus circa impedimentis eluctatus est. — In summa rerum aut hominum inopia, misera egestate, desertus ab omnibus, impeditus undique, tamen ad recuperandam libertatem, viam mihi communivi; citraque omnem extra opem, omne adjumentum, hoc solo præditus et

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

into a new military and political position. Having learned himself all the Roman discipline, he diffused among his countrymen as much of it as they could be persuaded to adopt, and prepared them to receive more; and from this period the wars of these fierce people became every year more formidable to the Roman empire, and more instructive to themselves. Nearly twenty years had elapsed between the time that Tiberius had marched to the Weser and the period in which Arminius effected his revolt. During all this space, the Germans had all the Roman habits and peculiar civilisation in their immediate contemplation: and all that intercourse occurred, which, so large a portion of the country, from the Rhine to the Weser, being made Roman provinces; which, the serving of their chiefs and people in the Roman armies, and acting with them as allies; and which, their perpetual communications with the numerous Roman forts and stations, could produce. Germany was thus constantly advancing to improvement from the time that Augustus established the Roman armies on its continent; and the successes of Arminius kept it from being too Romanised. By driving back the Romans to the Rhine, he preserved to his countrymen and their neighbours the power of continuing, not merely in independence, but of preserving their native manners and customs, with only so much addition of the Roman civilisation as would naturally and beneficially harmonise with

suffultus animo, a me ipso rerum initia petivi et bellum extremè periculosum, non antea cœptum sed ab omnibus desperatum prosequutus sum." He details his exertions, and contrasts them, with more patriotism than critical judgment, with the exploits of Scipio and Alexander.

Digitized by Google

these. Many new ideas, feelings, reasonings, and habits, must have resulted from this mixture; and the peculiar minds and views of the Germans must have been both excited and enlarged. The result of this union of Roman and German improvement, was the gradual formation of that new species of the human character and society which has descended with increasing melioration to all the modern states of Europe.

GERMANY was not at this time very populous. The Hercynian forest, sixty days' journey in length, overspread a large portion of its surface. It was the destructive policy of each state to make a little desert around its territories for their easier defence; and the Suevi who were in Suabia and Franconia, used this desolating protection so abundantly, that they kept the country for 500 miles around them in a devastated condition. The population of Germany was, therefore, but scanty, and dwelt chiefly near the rivers, at their mouths, and on the sea-coasts. The Roman invasions repeatedly thinned the numbers of their tribes, by the slaughter of their battles and subsequent cruelties; and when new populations multiplied, as these existed under new circumstances, and amid many alterations of native manners around them, every succeeding generation differed from its predecessors: but happily this difference, from the continual intercourse with the only civilised empire which then existed, was that of progressive improvement producing progressive power, until Rome became their conquest, and its provinces their spoil, and the scites of their new kingdoms.

GERMANICUS renewed the victories of his father Drusus, and endangered for a while the independ-

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

ence of the barbaric continent. His warfare, though his name lives in the panegyric of Tacitus, can be only compared with that, which we have witnessed in our days in St. Domingo. His first expedition was undertaken for the express purpose of human slaughter. One part of his legions, having destroyed their mutinous comrades, desired to attack the enemy, to appease, in a strange medley of compunction and ferocity, by the blood of the Germans, the manes of their rebellious fellow-soldiers. They accordingly rushed to the massacre of the Marsi. Their commander was as unfeeling, and as irrational as themselves; for, "Germanicus, to spread the slaughter as wide as possible, divided his men into four battalions. The country fifty miles round was laid waste with fire and sword: neither sex nor age excited pity; nor any places, holy or profane; their sacred temple, the Tanfanæ, was destroyed. This slaughter was perpetrated without their receiving a wound, because the enemies they attacked were sunk in sleep, or unarmed and dispersed." [15]

THE surprise of the Catti, against whom Germanicus sent Cœcina, was one of their next exploits. "His arrival was so little expected by the Catti, that their women and children were either immediately taken prisoners or put to the sword: Mattium, the capital, was destroyed by fire, and the open plains were laid waste." [16] In subsequent battles we usually find the addition, that "no quarter was given to the barbarians;" and in the progress of the Romans, the country was always desolated. In one battle we have this ferocious plan of warfare,

[15] Tacit. Ann. lib. i. [16] Ibid.

Digitized by Google

even commanded by the applauded hero of the historian: —"Germanicus rushing among the ranks, besought his men to give no quarter; he told them they had no need of prisoners, and that the extirpation of the barbarians would alone end the war!!" [17]

TRAINED amid their soldiery to such sanguinary habits, it is not surprising that the Roman emperors should have carried to the throne, the cruelties of the camp, and have exhibited there the merciless character, which in such campaigns as these they must have acquired. But to destroy the uncultivated nations of Europe, however unoffending, was no crime in the popular estimation at Rome. A surname from a country subdued was a charm which made its chieftains deaf to all the groans of humanity and the clamours of violated right. They pursued this trade of sanguinary ambition, though Greece had taught the Romans to philosophise on morality; and the orators of the capitol, in order to destroy an obnoxious governor, could sometimes declaim as if they had felt themselves the advocates of mankind!

AFTER these massacres of the Marsi and the Catti, Germanicus sailed up the Ems, and marched his army to the Weser. At this juncture Arminius [18] was not wanting to his countrymen; but the superior knowledge of his competitor, and the

[17] Tacit. Ann. lib. ii. Yet Germanicus is one of the few favourites of Tacitus. Such were the moral reasonings and sensibilities of one of Rome's most applauded historians, and who was one of the least tolerant of imperial and patrician misconduct in political transactions.

[18] Many have thought that the famous Irmensul was a monument of Arminius, whose heroic actions the Germans long celebrated in their songs; but there is no reason to believe that Arminius was ever venerated as a deity.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

discipline of the invading troops, were rapidly annihilating the rude liberty of Germany. Its bravest tribes fell fruitlessly in its defence; the survivors trembled for the awful issue; when the jealous policy of Tiberius, who had succeeded to the empire, rescued them from absolute conquest. He called back Germanicus from his victorious progress; although he asked to continue in his command but one year more, and would have extended the Roman empire to the Elbe.[19]

THE conquests of Germanicus were in truth so many depopulations. The Germans always fought till they had not men enough for further battles; and every war was the destruction of the largest portion of the generation that waged it. But new races sprang up rapidly in the vacancy thus made, and under circumstances that were continually becoming more promotive of their improvement, especially in war, and in all the mental qualities which were connected with it, and which could be excited by a struggle with an enemy so renowned and so successful. War became their necessity, as well as the theatre of their glory; and from the reign of Tiberius until the fall of the Roman empire under their swords, the German nations beyond the Rhine on the west, and beyond the Danube on the east, were under various denominations, of Marcomanni, Alemanni, Franks, Saxons, Burgundians, Lombards, and Goths, every year training and educating themselves in those military habits, laws, and exercises, and in the corresponding policy and institutions, which new

[19] Tacit. Ann. lib. ii. s. 26. It is painful to read that Arminius fell a victim to the treachery and ingratitude of some of his countrymen; or to his love of power and their love of liberty.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

events and experience discovered to be most effective for their own welfare and for the annoyance of their enemy. They were in every generation becoming more and more the Spartans of modern Europe. Their martial systems increased progressively in wisdom and vigour. The whole frame of their society was made subservient to their warlike objects; and it became impossible for Rome, in the degeneracy of its confined civilisation, to withstand the unremitted onsets of a people daily attaining superiority in force of mind, loftiness of spirit, ardent feeling, and moral fortitude and probity, as well as in technical discipline and manual activity.

A.C. 17. Repulse of the Romans to the Rhine.

The recal of Germanicus ended the progress of the Romans in the north of Germany. They had many conflicts and some successes; but they never reached the Elbe again. They retreated gradually to the south, though not with perpetual retrogression. Sometimes the interior tribes of the country were afflicted by their victorious invasions, and as often were consoled by their expulsion. At one period Hadrian made a rampart for sixty leagues, from Neustadt on the Danube to Wimpfen on the Neckar, which lasted till Aurelian: the natives then pulled it down. Probus replaced it with stone; but it soon became an ineffective barrier. At length, after various conflicts, the Rhine near the modern Leyden, separated the Romans and their allies from the free nations of the north.[20]

[20] Bebelius too eagerly denies that any part of Germany beyond the Rhine was conquered, though the emperors arrogated the surname Germanicus. Orat. vet. Ger. 1 Schard. 257. Mascou fairly states the fact, i. p. 131. — The Tabula Peuting. (on which some excellent remarks of M. Freret are in Mem. vii. p. 292.) confirms this boundary.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

It was not, indeed, an impassable boundary, but the Romans generally kept within it: and thus the nations beyond, and more especially the Saxons, who were among the most remote, had full leisure to increase their population, and to improve the propitious circumstances which attended their peculiar situation.

THE jealousy of Tiberius having stopped Germanicus from annihilating Arminius, and from destroying the nations beyond the Weser sufficiently for the extension of the Roman empire to the Elbe, all the German tribes from the Rhine to the Baltic were left to act, fight, and improve, with the new arts and knowledge which they had learnt from the Romans, and which they afterwards more fully imbibed from their future intercourse with the empire.

THEIR continuation in this independent state was favoured by the fall of Arminius. His talents and ambition might have subdued the north-western coast of Germany into a single dominion, but he being killed, and his Cherusci weakened, no similar hero, and no great kingdom, which such a character usually founds, arose in those parts. Hence every state from the Rhine to the Elbe, and amongst these the Saxons, grew up in the free exercise of its energies and means of power. Warlike activity was necessarily their predominating principle, not only in order to repel the Romans, but also to protect themselves from each other. It was indeed an essential individual quality. The life of each depended on his martial efficiency; for their wars, whether public or private, were always those of desolation and death.

THE Romans continued to be the military educators of the population in these parts, without

Digitized by Google

intending an effect so dangerous to their own domination. But their new principle or necessity, of forming part of their armies of German troops, led to this momentous result. They frequently felt its evil without changing their system. So early as the year 28, the Frisii, the neighbours of the Saxons, and some of whose nobles had served in the Roman armies, revolted, and for a long time remained independent.[21] Fifteen years afterwards, Batavi were serving in the Roman armies in Britain.[22]

From the Batavian marshes, in A.D. 47, Gennascus became the leader of the Chauci, and began that plan of operations which the Saxons in an after age so eagerly pursued. He plundered on Gaul with light ships. He became strong enough to invade lower Germany.[23] Yet in A.D. 69, the Emperor Vitellius became so fond of his German auxiliaries, as to take them to Rome, in their dresses of skins and long spears, and to consult their superstitions.[24] After him Civilis essayed and demonstrated the military efficiency which the tribes of these regions had acquired from Roman tuition. He had served among the Batavian cavalry that was employed in Britain, and he visited Rome. He found the sailors in the Roman fleet on the Rhine to be chiefly Batavi. With talents, which Tacitus compares with those of Hannibal and Sertorius, he roused his countrymen to arms against the Romans. The whole Batavian nation, Bructeri, Tencteri, and their neighbours, allied with him. He defeated the imperial armies, and was joined by the auxiliary

[21] Tacit. Ann. lib. iv. [22] Dio. Cass. lib. lx.
[23] Tacit. Ann. lib. xi. c. 18.
[24] Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. Suet. in Vit.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

forces, whom the Romans had trained. The Gauls submitted to him. One division of his navy sunk or took the Roman fleet; and he equipped another, to intercept their supplies from Gaul. Defeated at one time, he maintained a doubtful battle at another, and at last obtained a creditable peace; and the Romans again took Batavians into their service in Britain.[25] These events deserve our contemplation, because they show that great improvements flowed from the Romans, towards the regions where our Saxon ancestors were stationed, and thus assisted to educate them to a fitness for the great destination to which they were finally impelled.

FROM Civilis to Caracalla, in the beginning of the third century, the emperors left the nations beyond the Rhine, to the natural course of their own means of continuing the progress which the preceding events had excited. In Caracalla's reign, the tribes that dwelt on the Elbe near the North Sea, a position that includes the Saxons, felt so highly their own importance, as to send an embassy to Rome offering peace, but requiring money for observing it. The emperor gave the demanded payment; and so greatly favoured them, as to form a German body-guard like Augustus, and to wear himself a German dress.[26]

BUT the savage Maximin soon changed this flat-

[25] Tacit. Hist. lib. iii. iv. Civilis had maintained a personal friendship with Vespasian. "Cum privatus esset amici vocabamur." Lib. v. c. 26. Mascou, to his summary of the actions of Civilis, adds that his memory continued dear to the Hollanders: that in the Great Hall of the States General there were twelve pictures of his exploits, by Otto Veenius; and that the Dutch were fond of comparing him with their William, Prince of Orange, "the fountain of the liberties of Holland." Vol. i. p. 159.

[26] Herodian, lib. iv. c. 7.

Digitized by Google

tering scene. After the assassination of Alexander Severus, the ferocious Thracian assumed the contaminated purple, and announced his accession to the north of Germany in a series of victorious slaughter and unrelenting devastation. So irresistible was the tempest, that unless (says the historian) the Germans had escaped by their rivers, marshes, and woods, he would have reduced all Germany into subjection. His furious valour once betrayed him into a situation of so much danger in a marsh, that he was saved with difficulty, while his horse was drowning. His haughty letters to the senate display the exultation and the ferocity of his mind. "We cannot relate to you how much we have done. For the space of four hundred miles we have burnt the German towns; we have brought away their flocks, enslaved their inhabitants, and slain the armed. We should have assailed their woods, if the depths of the marshes had permitted us to pass."[27]

This destructive invasion, like many other evils, generated, by the greatness of the necessity, a proportionate benefit. By a conjecture more probable in itself, and more consistent with contemporaneous facts, than any other which has been mentioned, a modern writer has very happily ascribed to it the formation of that important confederation, which, under the name of Francs, withstood the Roman arms, and preserved the liberties of Germany.[28]

[27] Jul. Capitol. Maxim. c. 12. Herodian, lib. vii. p. 146. ed. Steph. The history of Maximin is related by Mr. Gibbon with elegance and accuracy, i. p. 173—190. 4to.

[28] Spener in his Notit. Germ. lib. iv. p. 338. "Non valde vereor adfirmare, Maximini crudelem in Germaniam incursionem fœdus inferioris Rheni accolis Germanis suasisse."

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

Their true origin.

It is the prevailing opinion of the learned, that about the year 240 a new confederation was formed, under the name of Francs, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and Weser.[29] As the incursion of Maximin took place about the year 235, the additional supposition of Spener is very happy, that this confederation arose from a general desire of security and revenge.

The horizon of Rome was at this juncture darkening: civil wars were consuming the strength of the empire; and its Germanic enemies, who had many losses of liberty, life, and property to avenge, were learning the dangerous secret of the benefit of union. The Alemanni[30] had alarmed Marcus Aurelius with its first exhibition. The advantage of this confederation generated others, until the Roman empire was overwhelmed by the accumulating torrent; and her western provinces were parcelled out among those warlike spoilers, whose improved posterity now govern Europe.

This sagacious union of strength in a common cause was consecrated on the Rhine by the general name of Francs, in which the peculiar denominations of the tribes were absorbed.[31] Their valour achieved its end; and their existence and general conduct were peculiarly useful to the Saxon nation.[32] The safety and success of our ancestors

Their use to the Saxons.

[29] Gibbon, i. p. 259. — Foncemagne, Mem. Ac. xv. p. 268., and Freret, Hist. Ac. Insc. ix. p. 88., and Mem. xxxiii. p. 134., unite in the opinion. — Mascou, who dislikes it, p. 196., has evidently not weighed all the circumstances.

[30] For the nations who assumed this name, see Spener, 175. 179.

[31] The states who united in the league are particularised by Spener, p. 341.; and by Chrytæus, Sax. Proem.

[32] The ancient writers give us some curious traits of the Francs of this period: "Francis familiare est ridendo fidem frangere." Vo-

Digitized by Google

may have flowed from this timely confederation. The Saxon exploits on the ocean, inflicted such wounds on the Roman colonies and commerce, that a peculiar fleet was appointed to counteract them; the southern coast of Britain was put under an officer called Comes Littoris Saxonici; and every historian mentions them with dread and hatred. It does not seem visionary to state, that it would have been one of the first employments of the Roman indignation to have exterminated them by an expedition like those of Drusus, Germanicus, and Maximin, if the confederation of the Francs had not interposed a formidable barrier that was never destroyed, and which kept the imperial armies employed on the south banks of the Rhine.[33] We may add, that the furious desolations of Maximin were favourable to the growth of the Saxon power; for they depopulated the contiguous states, and left the Saxons without any strong neighbours to coerce or endanger them.

Another cause, peculiarly promotive of the prosperity of the Saxons, and directly tending to facilitate their future conquests in Britain, was their application to maritime expeditions; and it is interesting to the philosophical student of history to remark, by what incidents they were led to this peculiar application of their courage and activity.

piscus Proc. c. xiii. p. 237. Ed. Bip. "Gens Francorum infidelis est. Si perjeret Francus quid novi faciet, qui perjuriam ipsum sermonis genus putat esse non criminis." Salvian de Gub. Dei, lib. iv. p. 82. Mag. Bib. Pat. 5. — Again, lib. vii. p. 116. "Franci mendaces, sed hospitales." — This union of laughter and crime, of deceit and politeness, has not been entirely unknown to France in many periods since the fifth century.

[33] Pontanus Origin. Franc. — Spener, 333—360., and his 2 vol. 421—429., and Schilters' Glossary, 316—322., furnish much information on the Frankish tribes.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

The Application of the SAXONS *to Maritime Expeditions.*

BOOK II.

THE situation of the Saxons on the sea-coast of that part of Europe, which was in the neighbourhood of some fertile provinces of the Roman empire, and yet remote enough to elude their vengeful pursuit; and the possession of an island, with a harbour so ample, and yet so guarded against hostile assaults, as Helig-land afforded, were circumstances propitious to a system of piracy.

THE tribes on the sea-coasts, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Baltic, had from the days of Cæsar been gradually forming themselves to maritime exertions. The Romans themselves, inattentive to the consequences, contributed to their progress in this new path of war. Drusus equipped a fleet on the Rhine to waft his army to the Ems: he cut a channel for his passage into the Zuyder Zee; and we find in his time, that the Bructeri, who lived on the left of the Ems, were able to fight a battle with him on the seas.[1] In the reign of Tiberius, Germanicus built a thousand vessels on the Rhine, Maes, and Scheld[2], teaching the attentive natives the use of ships, and the manner of their constructing them, and employing them in their navigation.

WITHIN thirty years afterwards, Gennascus, at

[1] Mascou, Hist. vol. i. p. 80. [2] Tacit. Ann. lib. ii. c. 6.

Digitized by Google

the head of the Chauci, evinced the maritime improvements of the tribes in these parts: for with light ships, armed for plunder, he made the descents already noticed on the contiguous shores, and particularly on the Roman provinces in France, knowing that they were rich, and perceiving that they were weak against such attacks.[3] His enterprises were in fact the precursors of those, with which the Francs and Saxons afterwards annoyed the Roman empire. The naval exertions of Civilis have been stated before.

As the population between the Rhine and Ems became thus accustomed to excursions on the seas, the Saxons began to multiply near them, and to spread into the islands we have described. But an active system of naval enterprise is not naturally chosen by any nation; and, still less, distant voyages, which are fatal to land warriors from their ignorance, and still more formidable from their superstitions. Hence the Saxons might have lived amid their rocks and marshes, conflicting with their neighbours, or sailing about them in petty vessels for petty warfare, till they had mouldered away in the vicissitudes in which so many tribes perished; if one remarkable incident, not originating from themselves, but from a Roman emperor, who intended no such result, had not excited their peculiar attention to maritime expeditions on a larger scale, with grander prospects, and to countries far remote.

This event, which tinged with new and lasting colours the destiny of Europe, by determining the Saxons to piratical enterprises, was the daring

[3] Tacit. Ann. lib. xi. c. 18.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

achievements of the Francs; whom Probus, during his brief sovereignty, had transported to the Pontus. To break the strength of the barbaric myriads, who were every year assaulting the Roman state with increasing force, this emperor had recourse to the policy, not unfrequent under the imperial government, of settling colonies of their warriors in places very distant from the region of their nativity.

Voyage of the Francs from the Euxine.

AMONG others, a numerous body of Francs, or rather of the contiguous tribes united under that name, was transplanted to the Euxine. The attachment of mankind to the scenes of their childhood; and their ardent longing, when in foreign lands, for the country which their relatives inhabit; where their most pleasing associations have been formed; where their individual characters have been acquired, and customs like their own exist; are feelings so natural to every bosom, and so common to every age, that it is not surprising that the Frankish exiles, when removed to the Euxine, regretted their native wilds.[4] We read therefore, with general sympathy, that they soon afterwards seized the earliest opportunity of abandoning their foreign settlement. They possessed themselves of many ships, probably the vessels in which they had been carried from the German Ocean to the Euxine, and formed the daring plan of sailing back to the Rhine. Its novelty and improbability procured its success; and the necessities which attended it, led them to great exploits. Compelled to land wherever they could for supplies, safety, and information, they

[4] So strong was this feeling in Germany, that some of the German chiefs whom Augustus forced from their country killed themselves. 1 Mascou, 85.

Digitized by Google

ravaged the coasts of Asia and Greece. Reaching at length Sicily, they attacked and ravaged Syracuse with great slaughter. Beaten about by the winds, often ignorant where they were, seeking subsistence, pillaging to obtain it, and excited to new plunder by the successful depredations they had already made, they carried their triumphant hostility to several districts of Africa. They were driven off that continent by a force sent from Carthage; but this repulse turning them towards Europe, and finding no where a home, they concluded at last their remarkable voyage by reaching in safety their native shores.[5]

In this singular enterprise, a system to endure for ages received its unpremeditated birth. It discovered to these adventurers and to their neighbours; to all who heard and could imitate, that, from the Roman colonies, a rich harvest of spoil might be gleaned by those who would seek for it at sea. It likewise removed the veil of terror, that hung over distant oceans and foreign expeditions. These Francs had desolated every province almost with impunity; they had plunder to display, which must have fired the avarice of every needy spectator; they had acquired skill, which those who joined them might soon inherit; and perhaps the same men, embarking again with new followers, evinced by fresh booty the practicability of similar attempts. On land, the Roman tactics and discipline were generally invincible; but, at sea, they who most frequent it are usually the most expert and successful. The Saxons perceived this conse-

[5] The original authorities are Zosimus, end of book i.; Eumen. Paneg. iv. c. 18.; and Vopiscus in Probo, c. 18.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

quence: their situation on the ocean tempted them to make the trial; they soon afterwards began their depredations, and by this new habit evinced the inciting and instructive effects of the Frankish adventure.

Usurpation of Carausius.

THE piracies of the Francs and Saxons are not mentioned in the imperial writers anterior to this navigation; but they seem to have become frequent after it; for within a few years subsequent, the Francs and Saxons so infested the coasts of Belgium, Gaul, and Britain, that the Roman government was compelled to station a powerful fleet at Boulogne, on purpose to confront them. The command was intrusted to Carausius, a Menapian, of the meanest origin; but a skilful pilot, and a valiant soldier. It was observed, that this commander attacked the pirates, only after they had accomplished their ravages, and never restored the capture to the suffering provincials. This excited a suspicion, that by wilful remissness he permitted the enemy to make the incursions, that he might obtain the booty on their return. Such conduct was fatal to the design of suppressing the piracies of the Francs and Saxons. It permitted the habit of such enterprises to become established; and the success of those who eluded his avarice, on their return, kept alive the eagerness for maritime depredations.[6]

ANOTHER incident occurred to establish their propensity and power. The emperor, informed of the treasons of Carausius, ordered his punishment. Apprised of his impending fate, he took refuge in augmented guilt and desperate temerity; he boldly

[6] 1 Gibbon, 362. 1 Mascou, 243.

Digitized by Google

assumed the purple, and was acknowledged emperor by the legions in Britain. The perplexities in which the Roman state was at that time involved favoured his usurpation; and, to maintain it, he had recourse to one of those important expedients which, originally intended for a temporary exigency, lead ultimately to great revolutions.

He teaches the Saxons, A.D. 287, the naval art.

As it was only by active warfare that his sovereignty could be maintained, he made alliances with the Germans, and particularly with the Saxons and Francs, whose dress and manners he imitated in order to increase their friendship. To make them of all the use he projected, he encouraged their application to maritime affairs; he gave them ships and experienced officers, who taught them navigation and the art of naval combat.[7] No circumstance could have tended more to promote their future successes and celebrity. They had sufficient inclination to this new path of action. They only wanted the tuition and encouragement. Fostered by this imperial alliance, and supplied with those essential requisites, without which they could not have become permanently formidable, they renewed their predatory attacks with licensed severity. Every coast which had not received Carausius as its lord was open to their incursions. They perfected themselves in their dangerous art, and by the plunder which they were always gaining, they increased their means as well as their avidity for its prosecution, and nurtured their population in the perilous but attractive warfare. The usurpation of Carausius, and this education of the Saxons to the empire of the ocean, lasted seven years.

[7] 1 Mascou, 244. 1 Gibbon, 364.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

Magnentius allies with them.

SIXTY years afterwards, a similar occurrence advanced the Saxon prosperity. Magnentius, another usurper of the bloody and restless sceptre of Rome, having murdered Constans, endeavoured to preserve the perilous dignity by an alliance of fraternisation with the Francs and Saxons, whom in return he protected and encouraged.[8] This was again one of those auspicious incidents, which enhanced the consequence and power of those tribes who had been invisible to Tacitus, and who had been merely known by name to Ptolemy. But as Providence had destined them to be the stock of a nation whose colonies, commerce, arts, knowledge, and fame, were to become far superior to those of Rome, and to pervade every part of the world; it cherished them by a succession of those propitious circumstances which gradually formed and led them to that great enterprise for which they were principally destined, the conquest and colonisation of Romanised Britain; and to be the founders of the great body of the English population; for, although Britons, Danes, Scoti, and Normans have contributed to enlarge its numbers, the far largest proportion of the inhabitants of England has arisen from Anglo-Saxon progenitors.

[8] Julian Orat. cited 1 Mascou, 280.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

The League of the SAXONS *with other States, and their Continental Aggrandisement.*

CHAP. V.

BUT in the beginning of the fourth century, the Saxons were not alone on the ocean; other states, both to the south and north of their own locality, were moving in concert with them, whose nominal distinctions were lost in the Saxon name. This addition of strength multiplied the Saxon fleets, gave new terror to their hostility, and recruited their losses with perpetual population. The league extended. Their depredations increased their population, affluence, and celebrity; and these results extended their power. What emulation, policy, or rapacity may have first prompted, success and fear made more universal. They who would not have been tempted to unite, dreaded the wrath of those whose proffered alliance they refused: and at length, most of the nations north of the Rhine assumed the name, strengthened the association, and fought to augment the predominance of the Saxons. Towards the south, between the Elbe and the Rhine, the Chauci seem to have led the way. The Frisii, urged by kindred passion and a convenient position, willingly followed. The precise date of the accession of others is not so clear; but in some period of their power the Chamavi, and at last the Batavi, the Toxandri, and Morini, were in their alliance. North of their territorial

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

position the Cimbri, the Jutes, the Angles, and others not so discernible, added their numbers to the formidable league; which lasted until their expedition to Britain[1], and then began to dissolve.

WITHOUT detaining the reader by a detail of the modern chorography answering to the position of these tribes[2], it may be sufficient to state concisely, that the progress and leagues of the Saxon states enlarged gradually from the Elbe to the Weser; from the Weser they reached to the Ems; and still augmenting, they diffused themselves to the Rhine with varying latitude, as the Francs, many of whose allies they seduced, quitting that region, and abandoning their exploits on the ocean, marched upon Gaul. The extension of this new confederation was favoured by the change of policy and position adopted by the Francs. As this people stood foremost to the Roman vengeance, they experienced its effects. They had many distressing wars to maintain, which in time compelled them to abandon maritime expeditions, and to consolidate their strength for their continental conflicts. Their ultimate successes made this warfare the most popular among them. Hence, the nearer we approach the period of the invasion of England, we find the Francs less and less united with the Saxons on the ocean, and even wars begin to be frequent between the rival friends. As the former moved

[1] Spener's Notitia, 363—370. That the Saxons of the fifth century were an association of peoples, was remarked by Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit. 305.; and Langhorn, Elench. Ant. Alb. 342. See also Freret, Mem. Ac. Inscr. xxxiii. p. 134.; and 2 Gibbon, 523.

[2] This may be seen as to the Chauci, Spener, 302—313. Cluverius, lib. iii. p. 72. Cellarius, Ant. Geog. i. p. 298.—As to the Frisii, Spener, 314—332. Cluv. p. 55. Cell. 295.—As to the Chamavi, Sp. 260, &c. The same authors treat of the others.

Digitized by Google

onward, to the conquests of Belgium and Gaul, the Saxons appear to have been the only nation, under whose name the vessels of piracy were navigated. Saxons were the enemies every where execrated, though under this title several nations fought. Some of the tribes on the maritime coast, who had composed the league of the Francs, abandoned it, to share the easier warfare and ampler booty of the Saxons. At last this successful people diffused themselves into the interior of Germany so victoriously, that the vast tracts of country embraced by the Elbe, the Sala, and the Rhine, became subjected to their power[3], in addition to their ancient territory from the Elbe to the Eyder.[4] An old Belgic chronicle in rhyme, makes Neder Sassen, Lower Saxony, to have been confined by the Scheld and the Meuse[5]; but this is a larger extent than others admit.

[3] That continental Saxony at last extended to the Rhine, is affirmed by Adam of Bremen, p. 3.; and see the later writers. Chrytæus, 72.; et Proem. Krantz Saxon. p. 5. Spener Notit. 2. vol. 400—413. Eginhart, the secretary of Charlemagne, says, p. 7., that in his time, Saxony Germaniæ pars non modica est.

[4] The Saxon poet commemorates the Saxons to have retained this region in the time of Charlemagne:

Saxonum populus quidam quos claudit ab austro
Albia sejunctum positos Aquilonis ad axem,
Hos Northalbingos patrio sermone vocamus.
Ap. Du Chesne, Hist. Fran. Script. 2. p. 160.

[5] Oude bocken hoor ick gewagen,
Dat all t'land beneden Nyemagen,
Wilen neder Sassen hiet,
Alsoo als die stroom verschiet
Van der Maze ende van den Rhyn,
Die Schelt was dat westende syn.
Schilt. Thes. 706.

I have heard that old books say,
That all the land beneath Nyemagen

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

The Jutes.

But those allies of the Saxons with whom the history of Britain is most connected, were the Jutes and Angles. The Jutes inhabited Jutland, or rather that part of it which was formerly called South Jutland[6], but which is now known as the duchy of Sleswick. The little band first introduced into England by Hengist and Horsa were Jutes. Their name has been written with all the caprices of orthography.[7]

The Angles.

The Angles have been derived from different parts of the north of Germany. Engern, in Westphalia, was a favourite position, because it seemed to suit the geography of Tacitus. Angloen, in Pomerania, had good pretensions, from the similarity of its name; and part of the duchies of Mecklenburg and Lunenburg was chosen out of respect to Ptolemy; but the assertion of Bede and Alfred, which Camden has adopted, has, from its truth, prevailed over all. In the days of Tacitus and Ptolemy, the Angli may have been in Westphalia or Mecklenburg, or elsewhere; but at the era of the Saxon invasion they were resident in the district of Anglen, in the duchy of Sleswick.[8]

Whilom was called Nether Saxony,
Also that the stream
Of the Maes and the Rhine confined it:
The Scheld was its western end.

[6] Chrytæus, Saxon. 65. Pont. Chor. Dann. 655.

[7] As Geatum, Giotæ, Jutæ, Gutæ, Geatani, Jotuni, Jetæ, Juitæ, Vitæ, &c. The Vetus Chronicon Holsatia, p. 54., says the Danes and Jutes are Jews of the tribe of Dan! and Munster as wisely calls the Helvetii, Hill-vitæ, or Jutes of the hills!

[8] Bede's words are: "De illa patria, quæ Angulus dicitur et ab eo tempore usque hodie, manere desertus inter provincias Jutarum et Saxonum perhibetur," lib. i. c. 15. His royal translator's expressions are similar: "Is tha land betwyh Geatum and Seaxum. Is sæd of thære tide the hi thanon gewiton oth to dæge tha hit west wunige,"

Digitized by Google

THE duchy of Sleswick extends from the river Levesou, north of Kiel, to the Tobesket, on which stands Colding; but that particular position, which an ancient Saxon author calls Old England, extends from the city of Sleswick to Flensberg. Sleswick was the capital of Anglen, and was distinguished, in the eleventh century, for its population and wealth.[9]

p. 483. Alfred, in his Orosius, alluding to the Danish countries on the Baltic, says, "On thæm landum eardodon Engle ær hi hider on land coman." Camden, in his introduction, attributes to the Angles the German cities Engelheim, where Charlemagne was born, Ingolstad, Engleburg, Engelrute; and Angleria, in Italy.

[9] Pontanus, Geographia, 655, 656. It is our Ethelwerd who gives us the ancient scite of the Angles most exactly. Anglia vetus sita est inter Saxones et Giotos, habens oppidum capitale quod sermone Saxonico Sleswic nuncupatur, secundum vero Danos, Haithabay, p. 833. Some, who admit this situation, will not allow that the Angli were German emigrants. Schilter's Glos. p. 49.—Wormius derives them from the Jutes. Literat. Runica, p. 29. This is a mere supposition. As Tacitus notices Angli in Germany, but does not specifically mention Jutes, a speculative reasoner might with greater probability, make the Angli the parents of the Jutes. That they were kindred nations, is clear from the identity of their language. Our Kentish Jutes have always talked as good English as our Mercian, and Norfolk, and Yorkshire Angles. Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, seem to have been coeval twigs of the same Teutonic branch of the great Scythian or Gothic tree. Some dialectic differences of pronunciation may be traced, but no real diversity of language.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

Sequel of their History to the Period of the ANGLO-SAXON *Invasion.*

BOOK II.

WHILE the Saxons were in this state of progressive greatness, in the fourth century, the prosperity and contiguity of Britain invited their frequent visits; and their attacks were favoured by the incursions of other enemies, who are called by the historians Picti, Scoti, and Attacotti.

A.D. 368. The Saxons attack Britain:

IN a similar combination of hostilities, Nectaridus, the commander of the Saxon shore, was slain, and the general of the island, Fullo-faudes, perished in an ambush. Several officers were sent by the Roman emperors to succeed them; but their exertions being inadequate to the necessity, Theodosius, an experienced and successful leader, was appointed by Valentinian in their room. The Picts and the co-operating tribes attacked from the north, while the Saxons and their allies assaulted the maritime coasts. Theodosius, from Richborough, marched towards London, and dividing his army into battalions, correspondent to the positions of the enemies, he attacked the robbers incumbered with their plunder. The bands that were carrying away the manacled inhabitants and their cattle, he destroyed, and regained the spoil; of this he distributed a small share among his wearied soldiers; the residue he restored to its owners, and entered the city, wondering at its sudden deliverance, with the glories of an ovation.

are defeated by Theodosius.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

LESSONED by experience, and instructed by the confessions of the captives and deserters, he combated this mixture of enemies, with well-combined artifice and unexpected attacks. To recall those who in the confusion, from fear or from cowardice, had abandoned their ranks or their allegiance, he proclaimed an amnesty[1]; and to complete the benefit he had begun, he prosecuted the war with vigour in the north of Britain. He prevented by judicious movements the meditated attack; and hence the Orkneys became the scene of his triumphs. The Saxons, strong in their numbers and intrepidity, sustained several naval encounters before they yielded to his genius.[2] They ceased at last to molest the tranquillity of Britain, and the addition of a deserved surname, Saxonicus, proclaimed the services of Theodosius.[3] He added the province of Valentia to Roman Britain, restored the deserted garrisons, and coerced the unruly borderers by judicious stations and a vigilant defence.[4]

370. Defeated by the Romans on the Continent.

THE Saxon confederation might be defeated, but was not subdued. Such was its power, that they were now bold enough to defy the Roman armies by land, and invaded the regions on the Rhine with a formidable force. The imperial general was unable to repulse them; a reinforcement en-

[1] Am. Marcel. lib. xxvii. c. 8. p. 283.

[2] Claud. 4 Cons. Hon. 31. "maduerunt Saxone fuso Orcades." Saxo consumptus bellis navalibus, Pacatus Paneg. Theod. p. 97.

[3] Pacat. 98. "Quum ipse Saxonicus."—The British government have wisely done equal justice to the defenders of their country: We have Earl St. Vincent, Lord Viscount Duncan, Baron of Camperdown, and Baron Nelson of the Nile, and Earl of Trafalgar.

[4] Am. Marc. p. 406. Claudian. de 3 Consul. Hon. states his successes against the Picts and Scots, p. 44.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

couraged him. The Saxons declined a battle, and sued for an amicable accommodation. It was granted. A number of the youth fit for war was given to the Romans to augment their armies; the rest were to retire unmolested. The Romans were not ashamed to confess their dread of the invaders, by a perfidious violation of the treaty. They attacked the retreating Saxons from an ambush; and, after a brave resistance, the unguarded barbarians were slain or made prisoners.[5] It is to the disgrace of literature, that the national historian of the day has presumed, while he records, to apologise for the ignominious fraud.

SUCH an action might dishonourably gain a temporary advantage, but it could only exasperate the Saxon nation. The loss was soon repaired in the natural progress of population, and before many years elapsed, they renewed their depredations, and defeated Maximus.[6] At the close of the fourth century they exercised the activity and resources of Stilicho. The unequal struggle is commemorated by the encomiastical poet, whose genius gilds, with a departing ray, the darkening hemisphere of Rome.[7] After his death the Saxons commenced new eruptions.[8] They supported the Armorici in their rebellion[9], awed the Gothic Euric, began to war with the Francs[10], and, extending the theatre

[5] Am. Mar. 416.—Orosius, vii. c. 12. and Cassiodorus, 2 vol. 636. also mention the incident.

[6] S. Ambrose, quoted 1 Mascou, 371.

[7] Claudian. de Laud. Stil. lib. ii. p. 140. Elz. edit.

[8] Jerom. in Mascou, 410. [9] Sid. Apoll. Paneg. Avit. v. 369.

[10] 2 Mascou, 39. Gregory of Tours, lib. ii. c. 19., mentions the capture of the Saxon islands by the Francs; and lib. iv. c. 10. what he calls their rebellion; and Chlotarius' successes against them, ib. et c. 14.; and their ravages in France, c. 37. p. 35.

Digitized by Google

of their spoil, made Belgium, Gaul, Italy, and Germany tremble at their presence. At length, Charlemagne, having prosecuted against them one of the most obstinate and destructive wars which history has recorded, their predominance was abased, and their spirit of aggression destroyed.[11] The celebrity and power of the Saxons on the Continent then ceased. They dwindled to a secondary rank, and have ever since acted a secondary part in the events of German history. But they have never been obscure. In the tenth and eleventh and twelfth centuries, colonies of their population settled themselves in Hungary[12] and Transilvania[13]; and allied themselves by marriages with the ruder chieftains of those regions. Saxon dukes became emperors of Germany soon after the separation of this dignity from the crown of France. Branches from their stem have formed the most illustrious princes in the north of Germany, and Saxony has the honour of having given birth to the great Reformer of Christianity in the fifteenth century, and her chieftains of successfully supporting this intellectual emancipation and improvement, till it became impossible for power or craft to suppress it. A king of Saxony still exists, though with dismembered dominions, and the country yet presents a people of the most cultivated mind of all the German continent. The rise of the Saxon nation

[11] See this war in Eginhart's Vita Carol. Magn. and in the Poeta Saxon. Antiq. Annal. de gestis Caroli M. ap. Duchesne, ii. p. 136.

[12] See the Chronicles of Hungary, of Thwrocz, pars ii. c. 11. c. 22.

[13] See the authorities collected by Eder on this point, in his De initiis, juribusque primævis Saxonum Transilvanorum. Comment. p. 17. and 63—78. Flemings, Hollanders, and others also went there. Ibid. Ed. Vienn. 1792.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

has been, therefore, singularly propitious to human improvement. It created a new formation of mind and manners, and polity in the world, whose beneficial results the state and history of England expressively display. No events tended more to civilise Germany from the third century to the eleventh, than the activity, leagues, colonies, conquests, and transactions of this people. All the improvements of Germany, beyond what Rome imparted, have arisen from the Saxon and the Frankish mind. They kept from it the more barbarous population of the Slavonians and the Huns, and the rude heroes of Scandinavia and the Baltic. The imperial reigns of the house of Saxony, nowithstanding the faults of some of its princes, principally contributed to establish the German independence, civilisation, and prosperity during the middle ages. But the beneficial agencies of this race on the Continent having diminished, other nations, whom they assisted to form and educate, are now obtaining a political, and will probably gain a mental preponderance; unless Saxony, in her adversity, shall regain a moral one—the great foundation of all intellectual superiority.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

The History of BRITAIN *elucidated from the Death of* MAXIMUS *in* 388, *to the final Departure of the* ROMANS.

CHAP. VII.

SOON after the termination of the fourth century, the Saxon invasion of England occurred. It will be therefore useful to consider the state of the island at that time. A just perception of the events which occurred in Britain previous to their arrival, will illustrate the causes of their success, and remove some of the difficulties, with which this portion of our history, from a want of careful criticism, has been peculiarly embarrassed.

IT is true that the transactions of the natives of Britain from the fall of Maximus, to the Saxon invasion, are almost lost to us, from the want of accurate historiographers of this period. But the more defective our information, the greater should be our care and diligence to profit by the notices which can be gleaned and combined from the contemporary documents. These indeed are few. The crude declamation of Gildas, Bede's extracts from him, the abrupt intimations of Nennius, and Jeffry's historical romance, or rather amplification of Nennius, with many additions from unknown sources, or from his own invention, and a few lines in some other Latin authors, are all the original documents which either Britons or Saxons have left us on this curious and important interval.

THE querulous and vague invectives of Gildas have been reduced to some chronology by Bede;

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

and the broken narrations of Nennius have been dramatised by Jeffry: but the labours of Bede have not lessened the original obscurity of Gildas; and all that the imagination of Jeffry has effected, has been to people the gloom with fantastic shapes, which, in our search for authentic history, only make us welcome the darkness that they vainly attempt to remove.[1]

Bede's chronology of this period erroneous.

THE chronology into which Bede has distorted the rhetoric of Gildas, was erroneously framed and chosen by our venerable and valuable historian.[2] His authority, which his learning would in any age make respectable, has been peculiarly impressive, because, without his ecclesiastical history, we should have lost almost all knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons for three centuries after their establishment in this island. With unsuspicious deference, our historians have rather studied Gildas, as he has been transcribed by Bede, than in his own

[1] In the Archaiology of Wales are two copies of Jeffry's History in Welsh; but they are not entitled to more historical respect than his Latin work. The Welsh triads have some curious notices concerning the ancient history of the Britons; but these are very unlike the fables of Jeffry; and this dissimilarity, while it makes the most ancient triads more respectable, increases our disrespect for his work, whether in Welsh or Latin. Some of the triads, indeed, which have a more modern aspect, seem to be taken from Jeffry's history. But I cannot believe that this history, whether first written by Tyssilio, Caradoc of Lancarvan, or Jeffry, was in existence, in its present details, before the eleventh century. Some of its incidents may have been earlier traditional stories; but their present arrangement, chronology, and details, and the amplifications and additions with which they are accompanied, appear to me to be fictitious, and unauthorised; fully as much so as those of Saxo Grammaticus. The true cannot now be separated from the invented. We are therefore compelled to discredit the whole.

[2] Bede postpones the invasions of the Picts and Scots, and the coming of the legions, until after Constantine. I have considered attentively the reasonings of his ingenious editor in his behalf, but I cannot coincide in his opinion. See Smith's Bede, App. p. 672.

Digitized by Google

composition; and thus they have governed the chronology of this interesting interval by the authority of Bede, without examining if Bede has not been himself mistaken.

It will much assist our inquiry to take a general survey of the history of the Roman empire at this period.

Rise and fall of Maximus, 383—388.

While Gratian governed the western empire, and Theodosius the eastern, the legions of Britain, who had so often been conspicuous for their turbulence, seceded from their allegiance to Gratian; and, in concert with the Britons, appointed Maximus, a Spaniard by birth, but then in the Roman service in Britain, to be their emperor in his stead.[3] He was a man of great merit. He accepted the dangerous honour, and prepared to support it. Perhaps, if he had been contented to have reigned in Britain, his throne might have been perpetuated, and then a new destiny would have changed the fortune of England and the western world. The Saxons would in that case not have obtained Britain; and a Roman British kingdom might have stemmed the barbaric torrent that afterwards overwhelmed the empire. But either from the desire of extending his dominion into his native country, or because the dignity and life of the new sovereign were insecure until victory had confirmed the usurpation, he collected a great body of British youth, and with these he passed into Gaul. Many wonders have been fabled of his levies, and of the fatal effects of their absence from the island. Many legends of the most ridiculous nature have

[3] Zos. lib. iv. p. 247. Socrates, lib. iv. c. 11. Sulpicius gives him a high character. Vir omni vitæ merito etiam predicandus,— if he had refused the offered diadem. Dial. ii. c. 7.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

been appended, which grave historians have believed.[4] That he raised all the force from Britain which he could collect, is probable, because he had a great stake to contend for, and the power of an ancient empire to withstand. But we need not extend this to the depopulation of our island, or to the total destruction of its military strength. His officer assassinated Gratian, after he had reigned fifteen years, and Valentinian admitted Maximus into a participation of the empire, who retained it until he failed to conciliate Theodosius, or ventured to contend with him for the dominion of the whole.

THE superior forces or ability of the emperor of the East avenged the death of his unfortunate patron. Maximus perished at Aquileia.[5] The British soldiers did not long survive the leader they had befriended; but that they wandered

[4] See Usher, 617—636. Ib. 200. This affair, as stated by Jeffry, lib. v. c. 14., is, that Maximus ordered 100,000 common people and 30,000 soldiers out of Britain, to colonise Armorica; c. 15. he desired wives for them; and c. 16. the king of Cornwall sent Ursula, his beauteous daughter, with 11,000 noble ladies, and 60,000 meaner women, who embarked at London. Great storms drowned part, and Guanius king of the Huns, and Melga king of the Picts, murdered the others, who resolved to be virtuous. Johan Major will have Ursula to be the daughter of the Scottish king, that Scotland may have the credit of her story. A lady settles the point by averring, that Verena, one of the virgins, assured her, in an express revelation, that the blessed Ursula was a Scotswoman; her convenient visions also authenticated their relics!! Vision Elizabeth, lib. iv. c. 2. Usher Primord. 618—624. Baronius, who with others countenances the emigration, mentions, that the Martyrologies devoted the 11th October to the memory of Ursula and the 71,000; a day still religiously observed at Cologne for this superstitious incident. Some affirm, that no person can be buried at Cologne in the place where they were said to have lain, because the ground throws up other corpses, which some deny!! Usher, 202. and 993.

[5] Socrates, p. 270—273.

Digitized by Google

into Armorica, and new-named it, seems to be unfounded.[6] CHAP. VII.

In 391, the generous Theodosius delivered the sceptre of the western empire to Valentinian, who marched into Gaul against the Francs. He renewed the ancient leagues with them, but perished by the weapon of a murderer in 392. A new adventurer for empire, Eugenius, assumed his dignity, made fresh treaties with the Francs and Alemanni, collected troops from all parts to maintain the exalted station he had ventured to seize, and advanced to defy the genius of Theodosius. In 394, he sustained a destructive combat near Aquileia, which terminated his ambition and his life.

The next year was marked by the death of Theodosius himself; and when he expired, the Roman glory began to set. His two sons lived only to disgrace him. The western hemisphere was possessed by Honorius, the youngest son of Theodosius, who, in January, 395, at the age of eleven, became master of an empire, almost besieged by enemies; Italy, Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Britain, looked up to him for protection[7], and in turns demanded it; while Arcadius, his brother, filled the throne of the East. A minister able to 395.

[6] This point has been much controverted, but I cannot avoid agreeing with Du Bos, that Quant au tems où la peuplade des Bretons insulaires s'est établie dans les Gaules, it was not before the year 513. Hist. Crit. ii. 470. The chronicle of the abbey of Mont S. Michel, in Bretagne, gives this year as the epoch of their arrival. Anno 513, venerunt transmarini Britanni in Armoricam, id est minorem Britanniam. Ib. 472. The ancient Saxon poet, ap. Duchesne Hist. Fran. Script. ii. p. 148., also peoples Bretagne after the Saxon conquest.

[7] Gibb. iii. 104. Aurelius Victor has drawn a very exalted and interesting character of Theodosius.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

have upheld a falling state directed the young mind of Honorius. Stilicho, his appointed guardian, passed the Alps soon after the new accession, reviewed the garrisons on the Rhine, and negotiated with the Germans. During the progress of the same year he marched the legions of the empire along the coast of the Adriatic, to punish the guilty favourite, who was diffusing misery through the East. In November, the fate of Rufinus delivered Stilicho from a competitor, and the world from a subordinate tyrant, who converted a trust of power into an instrument of base oppression.[8]

But the enemy that was destined to shake the Roman empire to its foundation, and to give the signal of successful onset to the barbarians who were crowding to encompass it, began now to appear. Superior genius frequently produces great revolutions on the theatre of the world, when it is placed in the sphere of command. Empires rise to grandeur by the potent springs, which that only can set in action; but when these have spent their force, and a new potentate appears, gifted with the same creative powers; the scenes of greatness change, the descendants of the illustrious are destroyed, and

[8] Gibbon, iii. 117—120. Claudian has punished the vices of Rufinus by a fine effusion of heroic satire. His description of the council of the calamities of mankind is a living picture:

"Nutrix Discordia belli,
Imperiosa Fames, Leto vicina Senectus,
Impatiensque sui Morbus, Livorque secundis
Anxius, et scisso mœrens velamine Luctus,
Et Timor et cæco preceps Audacia vultu,
Et Luxus populator opum, quem semper adhærens
Infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas,
Fœdaque Avaritiæ complexæ pectora matris
Insomnes longo veniunt examine Curæ."

In Ruf. lib. i. p. 21. Elz. ed.

Digitized by Google

new edifices of sovereignty are erected, to tower, to menace, and to fall, like those on whose ruins they exist. Such was Alaric, who, at the close of the fourth century, united under his sovereignty the strength of the Gothic nation.

CHAP. VII.

Rise of Alaric.

The Gothic nation had slowly but steadily advanced to consequence and power. Augustus had extended the Roman empire in the eastern part of Germany, up to the Danube. Before he died, Maraboduus, a German who had been educated by serving in the Roman armies, and by fighting against them, led the nation of the Marcomanni, with others of the Suevian race, into Bohemia; and founded there a new barbaric kingdom, which became peculiarly formidable to the Romans. His movements excited most of the nations between his new position and Italy to take up arms; and Tiberius was three years employed with fifteen legions, and an equal proportion of auxiliary troops, before he could subdue what was called Illyricum, or the countries that lay between the Danube and the Adriatic. The civil dissensions of the Marcomanni enabled the Romans to establish themselves beyond the Danube. Of the subsequent Roman emperors, Nerva, Trajan, and Antoninus had successful wars with these people, and their neighbours, the Dacians, Quadi, and others; but about the year 167, from a confederation of all these nations, Marcus Aurelius had to sustain a war, the most dangerous and destructive that the Romans had experienced. Almost all the nations from Illyricum to Gaul appeared in arms. Aurelius made proportionate exertions. To his regular armies he added slaves and gladiators, robbers whom he pardoned, and Germans whom he could trust. He sold by

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

auction, at Rome, all his personal property to augment his pecuniary funds, and after the military efforts of many years, at last subdued them; but the succeeding emperors were unable to retain any province beyond the Danube; and as they retreated, the nations to the north became more prosperous and daring.

Progress of the Goths.

Of these the Goths were the most adventurous and successful. They begin to appear in the imperial history about the time that the Francs are mentioned. They invaded Dacia. One Roman emperor, Alexander, used the ruinous policy of paying them an annual subsidy, and their history afterwards is that of continual progression. Many barbaric nations joined them; and, assuming their name, enlarged both their power and celebrity, as other tribes had thus contributed to the importance of the Francs and Saxons. Under Decius, about the year 250, the Gothic king passed the Danube at the head of 70,000 men, and ravaged Thrace and Macedonia: others afterwards invaded Asia, and with fleets assailed the Pontus. In 267, the Goths, Heruli, and Scythæ plundered the Archipelago, and devastated Greece. All the talents of Aurelian were insufficient to preserve the provinces beyond the Danube. He therefore abandoned Dacia to the warlike nations who were threatening it, and transplanted the friendly population to the right bank of the Danube. Probus pursuing this policy, caused 100,000 Bastarnæ to cross the Danube, and to settle in the southern provinces, which had been depopulated in these contests. To the same districts he also transplanted the Francs and Saxons. But all these measures were ineffective to resist the perpetual advance of the enterprising Goths,

Digitized by Google

becoming in every campaign better disciplined by their unceasing contests with the Roman armies, and by the education of their chieftains in the Roman service, during the intervals of peace. The ambition and spirit of the Gothic nation increased with their improvements and power; and when Alaric appeared to lead them, they discovered themselves to be as superior to the Romans in their military qualities, as they were in their political institutions, and in some of the moral virtues.

In this year, the western world had been alarmed by the irruption of the Huns.[9] After swelling their army by the nations they conquered, they had rushed on the Gothic tribes. Unable to repulse the ferocious invaders, the Goths had precipitated themselves over the Danube. Stationed by the emperor Valens in Lower Mœsia, the Goths revolted, penetrated into Thrace, defeated and killed their imperial benefactor, in 378, at Adrianople; and from this disastrous day never abandoned the Roman territory.[10] At length Theodosius made

376.

[9] The history of these Huns is ably abridged by Mr. Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 561.: he traces their unsuccessful contests with the Chinese, their divisions and emigrations, their conquests, the union of the Alani, and their wars upon the Goths. One of their ancient historians, Jornandes, c. 24., gives their execranda origine, that is, veneficarum cum immundis spiritibus congressu. M. de Guignes leads the way on their history. It was on the extensive steppe between the Dniester and the Bog, that Dr. Henderson, in 1821, saw those large male and female images hewn in stone, which these Mongolian Huns seem to have erected in this emigration; when they were driven over the Volga by the Sien-Pi in 374. "They are executed with considerable taste; the features, limbs, and ornaments, being all distinctly marked. Some of them are erect; others in a sitting posture. They hold with both hands in front of their body a small box or pot; and are generally raised to some height above the stone that forms the pedestal by which they are supported. They were found on the tumuli." Hend. Biblical Researches, p. 267, 8.

[10] Gibbon, ii. p. 591—617. Ib. 640.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

an accommodation with them; a large portion of their warriors were taken into the imperial service, and a successful attempt was made to convert them to the Christian faith.

Progress of Alaric.

AMONG the Goths, who were allied to the Roman armies, Alaric passed his youth. Born in the island of Peuce[11], on the Euxine, of one of the principal families of the Goths[12], he had early abandoned the confined limits of his native soil, for the civilised regions of Europe, where he cultivated his mind with their improvements. He solicited an appointment in the Roman armies, and he was only entrusted with the command of barbarian battalions. Though by birth a barbarian himself, he felt the superiority of his assuming
396. mind, and was disgusted by the degradation. In Thrace, in Macedon, and in Thessaly, he showed the terrors of his discontent; he obtained the passage of the immortalised Thermopylæ, overrun Bœotia, Attica, and the Peloponnesus; and though his superstition protected Athens from his fury, the other famed cities in Greece; Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, now enfeebled and degenerated, were conquered by his valour, his fortune, or his name.[13] When Stilicho advanced with the imperial troops, to chastise the daring invader, Alaric, by a great exertion of skill, escaped to Epirus, and extorted, from the timid ministers of the Byzantine court,

[11] Claud. de 6 Consul. Hon. p. 174. Peuce is an island at the mouth of the Danube, formed by two of its discharging torrents. Strabo, p. 211. Dionys. Periegetes, v. 301.

[12] Jornandes says of Alaric, "Secunda nobilitas Baltharum quæ ex genere origo mirifica," &c.

[13] Zosimus, lib. v. p. 292—295. Yet let not the historian's apology for Sparta be forgotten. "Nec armis amplius nec idoneis ad pugnam viris munita, propter Romanorum avaritiam."

Digitized by Google

the title and authority of governor of the Eastern Illyricum. He was soon after recognised king of the Visigoths.[14]

WITH these recollections of the Roman history, we may proceed to contrast the loose phrases of Gildas with the circumstances we can glean from the Greek and Latin writers, which seem applicable to the British history.

IMMEDIATELY after mentioning the death of Maximus, Gildas states[15], that Britain, despoiled of her soldiery and military apparatus, and her youth, who followed the usurper to return no more; and being utterly ignorant of war, groaned for many years under the incursions of the Scots from the north-west[16], and of the Picts from the north.

Gildas compared with the imperial writers.

THIS account, though obviously the language of exaggeration, is somewhat countenanced by the writers of the imperial history. It is stated by Sozomen, that Maximus collected a numerous army from Britain, Gaul, and Germany, and went to Italy.[17] We learn from others, that the Francs took advantage of his absence to invade Gaul, and

[14] The history of Alaric is narrated by Gibbon, v. iii. p. 134.

[15] Gildas, s. xi. p. 4. Gale's xv Scriptores. Richard, entitled of Cirencester by some, by others Monk of Westminster, places this invasion in the year after the death of Maximus, lib. ii. c. 1. See his de Situ Britanniæ in the Antiquitates Celto-normannicæ, p. 120. Ado. Viennensis, an author of the ninth century, gives a similar chronology. Chron. Ætas Sexta, 353. Bib. Mag. Patrum, v. 7.—Bede, without any authority, and contrary to the literal meaning of Gildas, postpones it for above twenty years, lib. i. c. 12., and thus lays a foundation for his subsequent mistakes.

[16] The Circius, which is the expression of Gildas, is mentioned by Pliny, ii. 46., as a wind famous in the province of Narbonne, and inferior in vehemence to none. Harduin interprets it, nord-west-nord.

[17] "Collecto ex Britannia et vicinis Galliis, et ex Germanis ac finitimis gentibus numeroso exercitu, in Italiam profectus est." Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 13. p. 721. Ed. Vales.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

that the Saxons also moved in successful hostility against him.[18] During the reign of his prosperity, in the second year of his empire, the Picts and Scots had vigorously defied him.[19] It becomes, therefore, highly probable, that these Irish and Caledonian wanderers would be alert to profit by the opportunity of his absence, as well as the Francs and Saxons. On this occasion we shall accredit Gildas; and as Maximus was killed at Aquileia, in 388[20], we may consider that as the year in which the incursions began.

THE next account of Gildas is, that the British nation, unable to endure these ravages, sent an embassy to Rome, desiring a military force, and promising a faithful obedience to the imperial sceptre.[21] That a province suffering under a hostile invasion should solicit succour from the fountain of power, and that, to obtain it, they should lavish assurances of fidelity, to expiate the imputation of treason, which the elevation of Maximus would produce, are circumstances which bear the marks of truth in their natural probability.

HE adds, that a legion came by sea, well appointed with every requisite for service; that, engaging with the enemy, they destroyed a great multitude, drove them from the borders, and li-

[18] The valuable fragment of Sulpitius Alexander, preserved by Gregory of Tours, lib. c. c. 9. p. 34., mentions the Francic incursion; and St. Ambrose, ep. 17., intimates, though with no particulars, the Saxon success. "Ille statim a Francis, a Saxonum gente in Sicilia Siciæ et Petavione ubique denique terrarum victus est." 1 Mascou, 371.

[19] Prosper in his Chronicon says, "Incursantes Pictos et Scotos, Maximus strenue superavit."

[20] 3 Gibbon, 40. The British history miscalls him Maximian, and kills him at Rome, lib. v. c. 16.

[21] Gildas, s. 12.

Digitized by Google

berated the subjected natives from their rapacity and tyranny.[22]

If we inquire of the imperial writers by whom this service was performed, we shall find that for three years after the fate of Maximus, both divisions of the Roman empire were governed by Theodosius[23], who, by his edict, made void all the usurper's exertions of the prerogative, that every thing might resume its pristine situation.[24] It was a necessary consequence of these orders, that the civil powers of the revolted provinces should be immediately replaced: we accordingly find that a Vicarius, named Chrysanthus, was sent to Britain by Theodosius, whose good conduct was admired.[25] No other period seems to have been more suitable to his administration.[26]

But from the time of Constantine the policy of the emperors had completely separated the civil and military powers.[27] This regulation could not allow Chrysanthus to have been the deliverer of Britain. The military arm was wielded by an arrangement of officers, jealously distinguished from

[22] Gildas, s. 12.

[23] Gibbon, iii. p. 55.

[24] Cod. Theod. lib. xv. tit. 14.

[25] Socrates, Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 12. This temperate expression of Socrates, ἐθαυμάσθη, was construed by Carte to imply the attainment of such a height of glory, that he must have stopped the Scottish depredations, p. 169. Our Henry also amplifies it so far as to say, that Chrysanthus was sent on purpose to check them, that he executed his commission with great ability and success, expelled the enemies, and restored the tranquillity of the province. He refers to Socrates as his authority, who only mentions what the text expresses.

[26] The remark of Carte is just, that in no other juncture could Theodosius have intermeddled in the affairs of the western empire. p. 169.

[27] Gibbon, ii. 43. Du Bos, Hist. Crit. i. 69. Le préfet du prétoire, et les officiers qui lui étoient subordonnés, ne commandèrent plus les troupes.—The vicarius of Britain was under the præfectus prætorio of the Gauls, Notitia, s. 36., and was a civil officer.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

the civil authority.[28] Chrysanthus may have governed Britain as Vicarius, to diffuse internal quiet over a revolted province, as far as the civil magistracy was able to operate, but could have no forces to coerce the menacing barbarians.

During the latter period of the reign of Theodosius, and for many years in that of his successor, the military force of the western empire was under the command of Stilicho, the master-general of the cavalry and infantry of the west.[29] It must have been under him that every military aid was despatched into Britain.

The indistinct intimations of the Monk of Bangor are confirmed by Claudian; his mellifluous muse devoted herself to pursue the triumphs, and to proclaim the glory of Stilicho; and in Claudian's historic picture of his fame, the victorious battles of this superior man with the Picts and Scots, form one of those groups, which, for this part of his life, have ensured to Stilicho an honourable celebrity.[30]

But the desired euphony and imagery of poetry are unfriendly to geographical and chronological detail. We must not, therefore, expect from Claudian, the exact year of the Christian æra in which Stilicho or his officers approached Ireland and Caledonia. We must endeavour to trace the chronology from other sources.

[28] Even Julian, when sent to command the army in Gaul, though he, en qualité de Cesar, ou d'héritier présomptif de l'empire, put prétendre à une autorité plus étendue que celle qu'un généralissime ordinaire auroit exercée en vertu de sa commission, cependant Julien n'osoit rien décider concernant la levée des subsides et la subsistence des troupes. Du Bos, 61.

[29] Gibbon, iii. 116.

[30] Claudian de Laud. Stil. lib. ii. p. 140. Elz. edit.

Digitized by Google

BRITAIN, according to Gildas, mourned these devastations many years. A probable interval seems to arise from the situation of the empire. Though Maximus was conquered in 388, yet the Francs and Saxons continued in hostility. When Valentinian, who was sent against them into Gaul, was murdered, the usurpation of Eugenius harassed the empire for two years. Soon after he had perished, Theodosius expired.

THE death of Rufinus left Stilicho at leisure, in the year 396. The African war was not prosecuted till 398, in which Gildo fell[31]; therefore we may consider either the preceding year, or the subsequent, 399, as the æra in which Britain was rescued from the spoilers.[32] This last will allow eleven years for the multos annos which Gildas notes to have intervened between the invasion after Maximus and its suppression.

THE querulous narration adds, that the Romans ordered the natives to build a wall between the two seas, in the north of Britain, to deter the invaders, and to protect the natives; that the irrational vulgar, having no director, constructed it of turf instead of stone.[33]

THIS narration has the appearance of being an ignorant account of the construction of one of

[31] Gibbon, iii. p. 128.

[32] Richard places it eleven years before the capture of Rome by Alaric, or 399, lib. ii. c. i. p. 121. Antiq. Celto-Nor. The criticism of Mascou, p. 394., on Pagius, who dates a similar passage in 402, confirms our Richard's chronology, as it makes 399 the year in which Honorius was preparing the expeditions alluded to in the lines,—

Domito quod Saxone Tethys
Mitior, aut fracto secura Britannia Picto
Ante pedes humili Franco, &c.
In Eutrop. p. 196.

[33] Gildas, s. 12.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

those famous walls, which have so deservedly attracted the curiosity of antiquaries.

GILDAS states, that this legion having returned home, the plunderers came again.[34] A passage in Claudian verifies the fact, that the legion quitted the wall soon after the successes of Stilicho, and diffuses a ray of light, which determines the chronology of the incident.

WE have mentioned the pacification which Alaric extorted from the eastern government: it might seem to them a release from anxiety; it was made by Alaric an interval of earnest preparation for more fortunate warfare. He surveyed the state of the world with the eyes of prophetic penetration, and discerned the vulnerable part, in which the genius of Rome might be fatally assailed. About the year 400, he suddenly marched from his eastern settlements to the Julian Alps, and poured his forces into Italy. The emperor of the West fled at his approach, when Stilicho again interposed the shield of superior talents. To meet the destructive Goths with a competent force, he summoned the Roman troops out of Germany and Gaul into Italy: even the legion which had been stationed to guard the wall of Britain against the Caledonians was hastily recalled, and attended the imperial general at Milan.[35] In the battle of Pol-

[34] Gildas, s. 13. The peculiarity of style in which he indulges himself is remarkable:—"Rabid robber wolves, with profound hunger and dry jaws, leaping into the sheep-fold," are the invaders who are brought over by "the wings of oars, and the arms of rowers, and sails swelling in the wind."

[35] Claudian, in his poem de Bello Getico, p. 169.:—

Venit et extremis legio prætenta Britannis,
Quæ Scoto dat fræna truci, ferroque notatas
Perlegit exangues Picto moriente figuras.

Digitized by Google

lentia, Alaric discovered the inferiority of his troops, and made a bold but ruinous retreat.[36]

The battle of Pollentia was fought in March, 403. We must allow time for the troops to have travelled from the north of Britain to Milan, and may date this departure of the Roman legion in the year 402. No one can disbelieve that in their absence the habitual depredators would return.

Gildas proceeds to inform us that embassadors went to Rome with rent garments, and with ashes on their heads, to implore further aid.[37] However we may be inclined to ascribe the costume of the embassy to the imagination of the author, we cannot dispute the probable fact, that the province solicited and obtained the protection of its sovereign.

We have no direct evidence from the imperial writer that Stilicho sent back the legion, after the battle of Pollentia, into Britain, but it must have been there before 406, because we read of soldiers then choosing and deposing emperors in the island. Their presence must have been attended with its usual effect on the Picts and Scots.[38]

Before we state the next sentence of Gildas, it will be proper to narrate the incidents, which, as as he does not notice, though of principal importance, we may presume he never knew: they occurred between this last defeat of the Picts and Scots, and the final departure of the Romans.

The unwearied genius of Claudian has resounded

[36] Gibbon, iii. 147—155.

[37] Gildas, s. 14.

[38] For the origin and history of these two nations, the reader may usefully consult Mr. Pinkerton's Inquiry into the early History of Scotland.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

the praise of Stilicho in poetry, which, though sometimes defective in taste, yet has too much energy and felicity to perish. The acts which the general achieved, justify his bard, and raise the minister above his degenerate countrymen. But it may be said of human virtue, as Solon pronounced to Crœsus of human happiness, that we should wait until the life is closed, before we pronounce decisively upon it. Stilicho for a while was the saviour of the Roman empire; he ended his career its most destructive scourge. He excited invasions, which he wished to have the merit of repressing; he introduced the barbarian hordes into the provinces, who quitted them no more; he occasioned rebellions which completed the debility of the imperial government; and paved the way for the extinction of the western empire.

Desolation of Gaul.

When Alaric menaced Italy, Stilicho drove off the tempest; but he wanted to have his son invested with the imperial dignity, and he hoped to extort the concession from the trembling Honorius, by the terror of impending evils. To effect this, he excited the German nations to invade Gaul.[89] Fatal

[89] Orosius, lib. vii. c. 38. and c. 40.; and from him Isidorus, Wandal. Grotius, p. 732., expressly affirm the treason. Jerom Ep. ad Ager. exclaims against the semi-barbarian traitor, who armed, against his adopted country, its worst enemies. Prosper says, that saluti imperatoris tendebat insidias, p. 50.—Marcellinus more explicitly says of him, "Spreto Honorio, regnumque ejus inhians, Alanorum, Suevorum, Wandalorumque gentes donis pecuniisque illectas contra regnum Honorii excitavit, Eucherium filium suum paganum, et adversum Christianos insidias molientem, cupiens Cæsarem ordinaire." Chron. p. 37. added to Scaliger's Euseb.—If these authors are not sufficient to make the imputation credible, the point seems to be decided by the evidence of a contemporary, who, being a pagan, gives more weight to an opinion, in which he and

Digitized by Google

contrivance of unprincipled ambition![40] A most formidable irruption of the tribes between the Rhine and Danube, Alani, Suevi, Vandali, and many others burst over the mountains, and deluged the western world. A portion of these, under Radagaisus, perished before Stilicho in Italy[41], and furnished him with the laurels he coveted. The remainder crossed the Rhine, which, if the charge of treason be true, was purposely divested of its protecting troops, and overwhelmed Gaul and its vicinity. "The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul: that rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars."[42]

the Christians coincide; I mean Rutilius, whom Gibbon does not mention: he says,—

> Quo magis est facinus diri Stilichonis acerbum,
> Proditor arcani quod fuit imperii.
> Romano generi dum nititur esse superstes,
> Crudelis summis miscuit ima furor:
> Dumque timet, quidquid se fecerat ipse timeri,
> Immisit Latiæ barbara tela neci.
> Visceribus nudis armatum condidit hostem,
> Illatæ cladis liberiore dolo.
> Ipsa satellitibus pellitis Roma patebat,
> Et captiva prius, quam caperetur, erat.
>
> Itinerarium, lib. ii. v. 41—50.

[40] Gibbon attempts to defend Stilicho, but the weight of evidence must prevail. Du Bos, p. 190., accredits his guilt. How fatal the scheme was to Rome, we may judge, when we recollect, that "le dernier Décembre, 406, fut la journée funeste où les barbares entrèrent dans les Gaules, pour n'en plus sortir." Du Bos, 194.

[41] For the expedition of Radagaisus, see Gibbon, iii. 163—173., and Mascou, 404—411.

[42] Gibbon, iii. 171.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

406. Revolt of the troops in Britain. Constantine chosen.

THIS disaster spread consternation through Britain. Inflamed with their success, the invaders menaced this island. It is expressly asserted by Zosimus, that their devastations alarmed the army in Britain. Apprehensive of their further progress, and to exert an energy adequate to the crisis, the troops created an emperor for themselves. One Marcus was their first choice: finding his councils or his conduct insufficient for the exigency, they destroyed him, and elected Gratian, who is mentioned with the title of Municeps, in his room. Within four months afterwards he was murdered, and, induced by the flattering name, the British soldiery selected one Constantine from the ranks, and decorated him with the imperial garments.[43]

Constantine leaves Britain. 406.

CONSTANTINE seems not to have been unworthy of his station[44]; he passed out of Britain into Gaul, stayed a short time at Boulogne, conciliated to his interest the soldiers scattered upon the continent, and defeated the terrible barbarians.[45]

406—411.

THE authority of Constantine was acknowledged in Gaul, and he reduced Spain. His son Constans laid aside the cowl of a monk, which, previous to his father's elevation, he had assumed[46], and was created Cæsar. Honorius, to whom Constantine had respectfully stated, that his dignity had been forced upon him, appeared to acquiesce in his retaining it, and sent him the imperial robes.[47] The barbarians obtained reinforcements, but Constan-

[43] Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 373. and 371. Orosius, vii. 40.
[44] Zosimus, ibid.
[45] Marcellin. Com. p. 38. Orosius, vii. 40. Jornandes, c. 32.
[46] Yet Frigeridus, cited by Gregory of Tours, characterises him as gulæ et ventri deditus, lib. i. c. 9. p. 35.
[47] Zosim. lib. v. p. 359.

Digitized by Google

tine adopted the precautionary measure of placing troops to guard the passages into Gaul.[48] CHAP. VII.

During this division of the imperial power, Alaric again assembled a willing army, and appeared on the Roman frontier. The guilt of Stilicho had been detected and punished, and his death removed the last bulwark of the empire. The court of Honorius could furnish no other mind competent to confront the Gothic conqueror. In 408, he overwhelmed resistance, and besieged Rome. A ransom obtained a short security, but determined his superiority. In the next year he assailed it again, and condescended to accept from an emperor of his own nomination the title of master-general. Every doubt was now removed; he saw his irresistible power, and the succeeding summer was marked by the dismal catastrophe of a third siege and successful assault[49], whose ferocious cruelties we might notice with abhorrence, but that the generals of civilised ages choose yet to perpetrate them in violation of all moral principle or social benevolence, and in wilful contempt of the inevitable opinion of posterity! Aug. 24. 410.

Among the officers attached to the interest of Constantine was Gerontius, who had proceeded from Britain. The valour and services of this person on former occasions are stated by the historians; but, offended that Constans returned to Spain, on his second visit, with another as his general, the slighted Gerontius abandoned the interests of the emperor he had supported, and elevated a friend to dethrone him.[50] He pursued his

[48] Zosim. p. 374.
[49] Gibbon, iii. 24.
[50] Zosim. 371. 373—375.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

new purpose with a fatal alacrity, besieged and slew Constans at Vienne[51], and menaced the father with deposition. The troops of the legal emperor, Honorius, profited by the quarrel, and destroyed the competition. Constantine was taken at Arles, and Gerontius was pursued to the confines of Spain; his house was besieged, and the assailants set it on fire. His friend and wife received from his hands the death they implored, and he joined them in the tomb.[52]

411.

The barbarians attack Britain. 409.

AMID this complexity of rebellion and sub-rebellion, the western provinces of the Roman state were sacrificed to the revenge of the military competitors. The crime which degraded all the merit of Stilicho was, from the same motives of selfishness, repeated by Gerontius. He also, to diminish the danger of his revolt, by his incitements and advice influenced into hostile invasion the barbarians who hovered near the Celtic regions.[53] This

[51] Orosius, lib. vii. Olympiodorus ap. Photium, 183. Marcellin. Chron. 38. Eusebius Chronicon, 412.

[52] See the detail in Gibbon, iii. p. 259. I am tempted to imagine, that in drawing his Vortigern, Jeffry has copied and distorted the Gerontius of the imperialists. Some particulars are alike in both. He makes Constans a monk, and Vortigern a British consul, — who rebelled against, and caused Constans to be destroyed. Vortigern being afterwards besieged in the place to which he fled, and his pursuers finding they could not get an entrance, it was set on fire, lib. vi. and lib. viii. — The facts from the Roman historians are, that Gerontius proceeded from Britain, and was a comes or count; that he revolted from Constans, who had been in a monastery and caused his death; that he fled for refuge afterwards, and prevented his pursuers from entering his house, who therefore applied flames. These coincidences would induce me to strike Vortigern entirely out of true history, but that I find a Gurthrigernus mentioned in Gildas, and a Gwrtheyrn in the Welsh remains. Their authority inclines me to believe, that Jeffry has confounded Gerontius, who died in Spain, with Gwrtheyrn, in England, and in his Vortigern, has given us a fictitious medley of the history of both.

[53] Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 375. There was a severe imperial law in

Digitized by Google

desperate act of ambition was unfortunate for Rome. Constantine could not repel the torrent, because the flower of his army was in Spain.[54] Britain and Gaul experienced all its fury. The cities even of England were invaded. To whatever quarter they applied for help, the application was vain. Honorius was trembling before Alaric, and Constantine could not even save Gaul.

In this extremity the Britons displayed a magnanimous character; they remembered the ancient independence of the island, and their brave ancestors, who still lived ennobled in the verses of their bards: they armed themselves, threw off the foreign yoke, deposed the imperial magistrates, proclaimed their insular independence, and, with the successful valour of youthful liberty and endangered existence, they drove the fierce invaders from their cities.[55] The sacred flame of national independence passed swiftly over the channel, and electrified Armorica. This maritime state, and its immediate neighbours, in the same crisis and from the same necessity, disclaimed the authority of a foreign emperor, and by their own exertions achieved their own deliverance.

Thus the authentic history from 407, is, that 409.
the barbarians, excited by Gerontius, assailed both Gaul and Britain; that Constantine could give no help, because his troops were in Spain;

existence, made A.D. 323, which was applicable to these crimes of Gerontius and Stilicho:—"Si quis barbaris scelerata factione facultatem depredationis in Romanos dederit, vel si quo alio modo factam deviserit, vivus amburatur." Cod. Theod. lib. vii. tit. i. It was perhaps in execution of this law that the flames were applied to the retreat of Gerontius.

[54] Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 375.

[55] Zosimus, p. 376.; and see Nennius, s. 25—27.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

that Honorius could send none, because Alaric was overpowering Italy; that the Britons thus abandoned, armed themselves, declared their country independent, and drove the barbaric invaders from their cities; that Honorius sent letters to the British states, exhorting them to protect themselves[56]; and that the Romans never again recovered the possession of the island.[57]

To these facts, which we know to be authentic, it is with much distrust that we endeavour to adapt the vague lamentations of Gildas, which Bede has abridged. The account which he has left us of men sitting on the wall to be pulled down; of the British nation cut up by the Picts and Scots, like sheep by butchers; of the country becoming but the residence of wild animals; of the antithetical letter to Ætius in Gaul, "the barbarians drive us to the sea, and the sea drives us back to the barbarians; so that between the two we must be either slaughtered or drowned;" of part of the natives enslaving themselves to the barbarians, to get victuals; and of the remainder turning robbers on

[56] Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 381. φυλάττεσθαι. The silver ingot discovered in 1777, in digging among the old foundations of the Ordnance office of the Tower, marked "ex officio Honorii," implies that the authority of Honorius was at first respected in the island.

[57] The Abbe Du Bos, Hist. Crit. 211., and Mr. Gibbon, iii. 275., agree in placing the defection and independence of Britain in 409. The words of Procopius are express, that the Romans never recovered Britain, lib. i. p. 9. Grot.—Prosper, in his Chronicon, intimates as much. In the year before the fall of Constantine, he says, Hac tempestate, præ valetudine Romanorum, vires funditus attenuatæ Britanniæ, p. 51. Scal. Euseb.—Bede, though he afterwards copies Gildas with mistaken chronology, yet, lib. i. c. 11., after mentioning the capture of Rome by Alaric, adds, ex quo tempore Romani in Britannia regnare cessarunt, after having reigned in it 470 years since Cæsar. Now in c. 2. he says, Cæsar came 60 ant. Chr.; therefore according to Bede, in this passage, the Romans lost the government of Britain by the year 410.

Digitized by Google

mountains, caves, and woods, can only awake our suspicion that querulous declamation has usurped the place of history, in his verbose yet obscure composition, or has converted local incidents into a national catastrophe. He who has stated these things has also declared that the Britons, whom the Romans for near four centuries had civilised, could not build a wall, nor make arms without patterns[58]; has mentioned nothing of the emperors, or transactions after Maximus; and has ascribed the walls of Hadrian and Severus to the fifth century, and the castles of the Saxon shore, so long before constructed, to a legion quitting Britain for ever. As far as Gildas can be supported and made intelligible by others, he is an acceptable companion. But he contains so much ignorant and exaggerated narration, and uses so many rhetorical generalities, that he cannot be trusted alone.[59] If any application was made to Ætius from Britain, it must be referred to the period when the civil contests that pervaded it invited the attacks of the northern invaders, and facilitated their progress, as we shall afterwards notice; and it may have been sent on behalf of particular districts only.[60]

[58] Gildas, s. 12. and s. 14.

[59] Gildas. Bede, lib. i. c. 12. and 13. The errors of Gildas are not to be charged upon Bede; he has only adopted them because he had no other Latin document to use. The Roman account of British transactions ceased when the imperial troops finally quitted England. Native literature only could supply materials afterwards for future history; but the Saxons of Bede's age did not understand the British tongue. Hence Bede had no authority but Gildas for this part of his history. Nennius had certainly other materials before him; for, with some fables, he has added many original circumstances which are entitled to attention.

[60] M. Niebuhr, in 1824, has published at Bonn the Panegyric of Merobaudes on the consulate of Ætius in Latin verse. It contains about 200 lines, and gives us a contemporary's laudatory account of the actions of this Roman general.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

The History of BRITAIN, *between the Departure of the* ROMANS *and the Invasion of the* SAXONS.

BOOK II.

WHEN Zosimus mentions Britain, for the last time, in his history, he leaves the natives in a state of independence on Rome, so generally armed as to have achieved the exploits of Roman soldiers, and to have driven the invaders from their cities. This appears to be authentic history. We may assume the governing powers of the island, at that period, to have been the civitates or the territorial districts, because the emperor would of course have written to the predominant authority. This was the state of the island in or after the year 410, and to this we may add from others, that the Romans never regained the possession of it.[1] There is evidence

A.D. 410.

[1] Mr. Camden makes Britain return to the subjection of Honorius, and to be happy for a while under Victorinus, who governed the province, and put a stop to the inroads of the Picts and Scots. Introd. 85. Henry, lib. i. c. i. p. 119. 8vo., enlarges still more; he states, that after the death of Constantine, Britain returned to the obedience of Honorius, who sent Victorinus with some troops for its recovery and defence; and that this general struck terror into all his enemies in this island; but the increasing distresses of the empire obliged Honorius to recal Victorinus, and all his troops, from the island.—There is no authority for this circumstantial detail. Rutilius, in his journey in Italy about 416, merely takes occasion to compliment Victorinus on his former honours. In this friendly digression he says, that the ferox Britannus knew his virtues, whom he had governed so as to excite their attachment. Itiner. 499. p. 14. ed. Amst. Whether he governed it under Theodosius or Honorius is not said. That he could have no command of troops is certain, because the vicarius or governor was a civil officer. The act of his government, according to Rutilius, was not then a recent thing, but at some distance, because he adds

Digitized by Google

that they assailed the liberties of Armorica[2], but none that they contested with the Britons the enjoyment of their independence.

THE Britons, who had been strong enough to repulse from their island the barbarians who had overrun Gaul, or who had taken advantage of that calamity to molest them, could not have been subdued without a serious invasion. Even the exposed and inferior Armorica maintained a vigorous resistance. But the dismal aspect of the Roman state, during the fifth century, coincides with the absolute silence of authors to prove that the Romans forbore to invade the British independence.

THE majesty of the capitol had departed; the world no longer crouched in submission before it; and even its own subjects are said to have rejoiced over its ruin. The Goths conquered Spain; a rebel arose from the tomb of Honorius; another general repeated the treason of Stilicho; and the terrible Genseric embarked with his Vandals against Africa: even Ætius was a subject of dubious fidelity. At the head of 60,000 barbarians he extorted the honours he enjoyed, maintained his connection with the Huns and Alaric, and had to withstand the Francs and Suevi. The son of Alaric besieged Narbonne, the Belgic provinces were invaded by

another event, which, he says, lately happened, "illustris nuper sacra comes additus aulæ:" marking this honour as a recent event in 416, implies that the others were not recent; hence there is no reason to place him in Britain after 409.

[2] Du Bos, Hist. Crit. p. 213., thinks, that the revolt of Armorica contributed more than any other event to establish la monarchie Françoise in Gaul. Armorica comprehended five of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. On its struggles for liberty, see Du Bos, and 1 Mascou, 453. 476.; also 3 Gibbon, 275.—It had afterwards many unfavourable conflicts with the Francs. Greg. Tours. lib. iv. and v. Freculphus, lib. ii. c. 22.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

the Burgundians, and the desolating Attila at last burst upon Gaul.[3]

But whatever was the cause which induced Honorius to permit, or withhold his successors from molesting, the independence of Britain, it was an event which might have been made beneficial to every class of its inhabitants. The Romans had, in the beginning of their conquests in Britain, from motives of self-preservation, endeavoured to civilise it. When by their incentives, the national mind had been diverted from habits of warfare, to the enjoyments of luxury and the pursuits of commerce, the natives shared in the prosperity, the vices, and the institutions of the governing empire. At the end of the fourth century, the evils of corrupted civilisation, and of its invariable attendant, a weak, tyrannical, and oppressive government, were dissolving in every part the decaying fabric of the Roman dominion. Its state at this period has been described to us by a contemporary, who though he writes with the antithesis without the genius of Seneca, yet was a man of sense and piety, and saw clearly and felt strongly the mischiefs which he laments, and the ruin to which they tended.[4] He, after detailing the social vices of the Roman world at that time — its general selfishness, rivalry, envy, profligacy, avarice, sensuality, and malignant competitions, expatiates on one important fact, which deserves our peculiar notice, from its destructive hostility to the stability of the empire, as well as to the welfare of every individual. This was not

[3] See Gibbon, iii. p. 262—271., and 327—432.

[4] This was Salvian, an ecclesiastic of Marseilles. It occurs in his treatise De Gubernatione Dei, which is published in the Magna Bibliotheca Patrum, vol. v.

Digitized by Google

merely the weight and repetition of the taxations imposed by the government, but still more, the permitted and overwhelming oppressions of the authorised tax-gatherers, exceeding their authority, and converting their office into the means of the most arbitrary and ruinous oppressions.

State of the Roman provinces.

He says, "In all the cities, municipia, and villages, there are as many tyrants as there are officers of the government; they devour the bowels of the citizens, and their widows and orphans; public burthens are made the means of private plunder; the collection of the national revenue is made the instrument of individual peculation; none are safe from the devastations of these depopulating robbers. The public taxation is a continual destruction: the burthens, though severe, would be more tolerable, if borne by all equally and in common; but they are partially imposed and arbitrarily levied: hence many desert their farms and dwellings to escape the violence of the exactors; they seek exile to avoid punishment. Such an overwhelming and unceasing proscription hangs over them, that they desert their habitations, that they may not be tormented in them."[5]

Such were the evils under which the people of the Roman empire were groaning, from the conduct of the officers of the public revenue, who seem to have resembled Turkish Pashas. The disastrous consequences to the empire itself are as forcibly delineated.

"From these oppressions many, and those not of obscure birth but of liberal education, fly to our national enemies (that is, the barbaric nations press-

[5] Salvian, p. 89. 91.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

ing on the Roman empire); that they may not perish under the afflictions of legal prosecutions. And although the people to whom they retire differ in religion, language, and ruder manners, yet they prefer to suffer the inconveniences of dissimilar customs among barbarians, than ruinous injustice among Romans. They emigrate to the Goths, to the Bagaudæ, and other ruling barbarians, and do not repent the change."[6]

THIS preference given by the Roman people to the protection of the barbaric government, to that under which they had been brought up, explains impressively the facility, with which the German nations, at this period, overwhelmed the Roman empire. He mentions it repeatedly and emphatically.

"THUS the name of Roman citizen, once so valued and bought so dearly, is now spontaneously repudiated and shunned: it is esteemed not only useless but abominable. What can be a greater evidence of the iniquity of the Roman administration, than that so many both noble and honourable families, and to whom the Roman state ought to be the means of the highest honour and splendour, are driven to this extremity, that they will be no longer Romans?"[7]

HIS next assertion is, that, if they did not emigrate to the barbaric nations, they became part of those affiliated robbers who were called Bagaudæ.[8]

[6] Salv. p. 90. [7] Ibid.

[8] To Scaliger's note on the Bagaudæ, Animad. Euseb. 248., we may add that Bagat, in the Armoric, is a troop or crew. Lhuyd Archaiol. 196. Bagach, in Irish, is warlike. Bagach, in Erse, is fighting. Bagad, in Welsh, is multitude. Du Cange mentions

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

The Bagaudæ.

"THEY who do not fly to the barbarians, become themselves barbarians. In this state is a large portion of Spain, and no small part of Gaul. Roman oppression makes all men no longer Romans. The Bagaudæ are those who, plundered and maltreated by base and bloody judges, after they had been deprived of the right of Roman liberty, choose to lose the honours of the Roman name. We call them rebels and traitors, but we have compelled them to become criminal. By what other causes are they made Bagaudæ but by our iniquities; by the dishonesty of our judges; by the proscriptions and rapine of those who convert the public exactions into emoluments for themselves; who make the appointed taxations the means of their own plunder; — they fly to the public foe to avoid the tax-gatherer."[9]

HE declares these feelings to have been universal.

"HENCE there is but one wish among all the Romans; that they did not live subject to the Roman laws. There is one consenting prayer among the Roman population, that they might dwell under the barbarian government. Thus our brethren not only refuse to leave these nations for their own, but they fly from us to them. Can we then wonder that the Goths are not conquered by us, when the people would rather become Goths with them than Romans with us."[10]

βαγεύειν, vagare, and Boguedim, Hebrew for rebellis. Glos. Med. Lat. i. p. 432. See their history in Du Cange, ib., and Du Bos, p. 204.

[9] Salv. p. 90, 91.

[10] Salv. 92. I cannot dismiss this author without noticing the intimation he gives us of the moral benefit which the irruptions of the

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

THESE political evils, thus oppressively affecting the general population of the Roman empire, may satisfy us, that the Britons, once become independent, armed, and victorious over their barbaric invaders, would not court the return of the Roman yoke. Therefore every narration which states, that after their independence they offered unconditional

German barbaric tribes produced at that period. The Vandals furnish an instance, who, it is well known, invaded Spain, and from thence passed victoriously into Africa, where they established a kingdom; they were one of the weakest of the barbaric nations, yet they were led onwards to successes that surprised the dismayed Romans. Though fierce and rude, they were remarkable for the chastity of their manners, at the very time when voluptuous profligacy was prevailing in the Roman empire, and especially in its provinces in Africa. Salvian mentions the African depravity from his own observations in the strongest terms of reprehension. The abominations were general and incurable. He describes, as a specimen, Carthage, the Rome of Africa, which had its schools, philosophers, gymnasia, churches, nobles, magistrates, and every establishment and advantage that distinguished a Roman great city. But he says he saw it full of the most dissolute luxury, and the foulest vices and debauchery in all its inhabitants, as well as of the most selfish tyranny and rapacity in the great and rich. It was even the fashion for the men to dress themselves as women, and to pass for such. In this state of evil, the Vandals, like a torrent, over-ran the north of Africa, and settled themselves in Carthage, and the other towns: their speedy corruption was anticipated in a country so abandoned; but, to the astonishment of the empire, instead of degenerating into the universal depravity, they became as moral reformers. The luxuries and vices that surrounded them, excited their disgust and abhorrence. Their own native customs were so modest, that instead of imitating they despised, and punished, with all their fierce severity, the impurities they witnessed. They compelled all the prostitutes to marry. They made adultery a capital crime; and so sternly punished personal debauchery, that a great moral change took place in all the provinces they conquered. He details these circumstances in his seventh book. He gives our Saxon ancestors the same character, "feri sed casti," fierce but chaste; and it seems to be manifest, that the superior character, virtue, mind, and general loveliness of the ladies of modern Europe, have arisen from the barbaric tribes of ancient Germany, and from the revolution of manners, as well as of government, which they produced by their conquest of the Roman empire.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

submission to the Roman empire, cannot but excite our suspicion or disbelief.

When we proceed to inquire into the events which followed the emancipation of Britain, the first question which naturally occurs to us is, What was the government which the natives substituted to the imperial institutions?

Britain, under the Romans, contained two municipia, nine coloniæ, ten civitates possessing the Latio jure, twelve stipendariæ, besides many other towns.[11] It was usual with the Romans to partition their conquests into districts, called civitates. In Gaul, during the fifth century, there were one hundred and fifteen civitates; each of these had its capital city, in which resided a senate, whose jurisdiction extended over all the pagi which composed the territory of the civitas.[12] Now if the seventeen provinces of Gaul had one hundred and fifteen civitates, the five provinces of Britain, which were as flourishing, might reasonably have had thirty-three, which is the number of the great towns enumerated by Richard.

Civitates of Britain.

We are, therefore, to consider Britain, in the latter periods of the Roman residence, divided into thirty-three civitates, of which thirty were in England and Wales, and therefore under so many municipal administrations. The chief towns were[13]:—

Municipia:
Verolamium,
Eboracum.
Coloniæ:
Londineium,
Camalodunum,
Rhutupis,
Thermæ,
Isca Secundæ,
Deva Getica,

[11] Richard, p. 111. Antiq. Celto-Scand. [12] Du Bos, i. p. 2.
[13] Richard, ubi sup. For the modern names, see Mr. Whitaker's Manchester, vol. ii. 330—379.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

Glevum,
Lindum,
Camboricum.

Latio jure donatæ:
Durnomagus,
Catarracton,
Cambodunum,
Coccium,
Luguballia,
Ptoroton, Victoria, Theodosia, } in Scotland,
Corinum,
Sorbiodunum.

Stipendariæ:
Venta Silurum,
Venta Belgarum,
Venta Icenorum,
Segontium,
Muridunum,
Ragæ,
Cantiopolis,
Durinum,
Isca,
Bremenium,
Vindonum,
Durobrovæ.

In each of these principal towns, the offices of power and dignity belonging to each civitas, were made residentiary; the duumviri, senates, decurions, curiæ, and ediles. These civitates were arranged under five provinces, two of which were governed by consulares, and three by presides. Above these provincial magistrates a vicarius extended his over-ruling authority, subordinate only to a prætorian præfect, with whom the emperor preserved an immediate communication.[14]

The vicarius and the provincial magistrates, or the consulares and presides, were foreigners. With such a jealous hand did Rome maintain her empire, that no native was suffered to enjoy, in any case, the provincial administration; nor could the provincial officers, or their children, marry with a native, or purchase territorial property, slaves, or houses.[15] On the other hand, the municipal officers of the civitates seem to have been natives.

It was a point carefully guarded by law, that the

[14] 2 Gibbon, 32—38. Notitia, s. 49. [15] 2 Gibbon, p. 39.

Digitized by Google

officers of one civitas should not interfere with any other; hence the edict, that no duumviri should with impunity extend the power of their fasces beyond the bounds of their own civitas.[16] The decurions served for the civitas of their nativity; and it was ordered, if to avoid the office any withdrew to another civitas, that he should be made to serve in both.[17]

We may, therefore, conceive England and Wales, in the fifth century, divided into thirty independent civitates, governed by native officers originating from each civitas. The imperial magistrates, whom Zosimus mentions that they deposed, were most likely the vicarius, the consulares, and the presides; and on their deposition, the island, as far as it was possessed by the Britons, would naturally divide into thirty independent republics: or, into as many separate republics as there were civitates. That this event did happen we have a sort of evidence in the circumstance, that Honorius addressed his letters to the civitates of Britain.

But in addition to these civil powers, the influence of the ecclesiastical must be taken into consideration. In Gaul, therefore most probably in Britain, every civitas had a bishop[18], and every province had a superior bishop, answerable to our metropolitans, though not distinguished with the title of archbishop. The bishops had some power, and from this enjoyed much consideration and credit in every district. The people in general were in two divisions, the free and the servile.

[16] Cod. Theod. lib. xii. tit. i. s. 174.
[17] Ibid. s. 12.
[18] Du Bos, i. p. 14.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

THUS far the few facts left to us fairly extend. Independent Britain, after the year 410, contained many independent republics or civitates; each of which was governed by chief magistrates or duumviri, a senate, subordinate officers called decurions, an inferior senate called curiæ, with other necessary officers. The ecclesiastical concerns were regulated by a bishop in each, whose power sometimes extended into lay concerns.

BUT it is probable that these thirty independent civitates did not long continue in peace with each other. The degenerated civilisation, bad financial system, and oppressive government of the Romans, must have left evil habits and tendencies in the British population. Nor can we suppose that the natives of each civitas would always be contented with the legal power of the offices to which they were called; quietly lay down the fasces at the end of the year, if duumviri; or if senators, seek no more authority than belonged to their official acts; or if inferiors, aspire not unduly to an elevation of condition. The accidents of human life would not fail to involve disputes of jurisdiction between one civitas and others; and mankind are generally eager to determine their differences by force. Hence it was likely that no long interval would ensue before civil discord pervaded the island, and that this would terminate in the predominance of military tyrants; because in that most dreadful of all evils, civil fury, it is the sword which eventually prevails.

Civil discord in the island.

THE lamentations of Gildas concur with the obscure intimations of Nennius to prove that a considerable part of the interval between the emancipation of the island and the arrival of the Saxons

Digitized by Google

was occupied in the contests of ambitious partisans. CHAP. VIII.

"THE country," says Gildas, "though weak against its foreign enemies was brave and unconquerable in civil warfare. Kings were appointed, but not by God; they who were more cruel than the rest, attained to the high dignity."

WITH as little right or expediency as they derived their power they lost it. "They were killed, not from any examination of justice, and men more ferocious still were elected in their place. If any happened to be more virtuous or mild than the rest, every degree of hatred and enmity was heaped upon them."[19] The clergy partook of the contentions of the day.

HE renews this picture in his address to the British kings who had survived the Saxon invasion, and although his expressions are not elucidated by any historical detail, yet they are supported by the expression of St. Jerome, "Britain, a province fertile in tyrants," and by the assertion of Procopius, that it remained a long time under its tyrants.[20]

HERE that agreement between Gildas and other writers occurs, which entitles him to belief; and if his other loose declamations about the devastations of the barbarians in Britain, and the application of the natives to Ætius for succour, have any foundation, they must be referred to the period of those civil wars which succeeded the Roman departure. We can conceive, that when the strength of the country was not directed to its protection, but was

[19] Gildas, s. 19.

[20] Procop. Hist. Vandal, lib. i. sed mansit ab eo tempore sub τυραννοις.—2 Jerom ad Ctes. Britannia provincia fertilis tyrannorum. 3 Gibb. 277. 1 Masc. 516.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

wasted in mutual conflicts, the hostilities of the Picts and Scots may have met with much success. Not opposed by the force of the whole island, but by the local power of the particular civitas or district invaded, the enemies may in many parts, especially of the northern districts, have defeated the opposition, and desolated the land of the northern borders and the adjacent coasts. With equal success, from the same cause, the western shores may have been plundered by the Scots, and the southern by the Saxons. Some of the maritime states, abandoned by their more powerful countrymen, may have sought the aid of Ætius, as they afterwards accepted that of the Saxons; but either the account of Gildas is rhetorical exaggeration, or is applicable only to particular districts, and not to the whole island.

Many kings in Britain.

THESE contests seem at last to have produced a great cluster of regal chiefs within the island. We hear of kings of Devonshire, Cornwall, Kent, and Glastonbury; several kings of Cumbria, the kings of Deira and Bernicia, several contemporary kings of Wales, and others in the north and west of England, about the time of the Saxons.[21] We find Malgocune styled by Gildas, the dethroner of many tyrants; and Nennius mentions the Saxons to have fought, and Arthur to have marched, with the kings of the Britons.[22] But this succession of tyrants is only known to us by casual intimation, and by the denunciations of Gildas. They appear in their rest of obscurity like the distant wood at the last refractions of the departed sun: we behold only

[21] See Gildas, Ep. p. 10. Nennius, p. 105—107. 117. Taliesin, passim. Caradoc Llanc. ap. Usher, 469. Llyward hen; Aneurin.
[22] Gildas, 12. Nennius, 114.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

a dark mass of gloom, in which we can trace no shapes, and distinguish no individuals.

In this period of the independence and civil warfare of Britain, one tyrant is said to have predominated over the rest, or at least in the southern part of the island, whom Gildas calls Gurthrigernus, and whom the Welsh triads and poets name Gwrtheyrn.[23]

But Britain was not now in the state in which the Romans had found it. Its towns were no longer barricadoed forests[24], nor its houses wood cabins covered with straw[25], nor its inhabitants savages, naked with painted bodies[26], or clothed with skins.[27] It had been for above three centuries the seat of Roman civilisation and luxury. Roman emperors had been born[28], and others had reigned in it.[29] The natives had been ambitious to obtain, and hence had not only built houses, temples, courts, and market places in their towns, but had adorned them with porticoes, galleries, baths, and

[23] It has been already remarked, p. 76, that the Vortigern of Jeffry seems to be a mixture of Gerontius and Gwrtheyrn. Nennius has added some idle fables to his name; yet gives him a genealogy. Mac Guortheneu, McGuitaul, McGuitolin, Mc ap Glou, p. 112. The Saxon Ethelwerd, p. 833. calls him Wrtheyrn, which corresponds with the name in the Welsh remains.

[24] Cæsar, lib. v. c. 14. Tac. Vit. Agr. Strabo, lib. iv.

[25] Diod. Sic. lib. v. c. 8.

[26] Cæsar, lib. v. Mela, lib. iii. c. 6. Pliny, Hist. lib. xxii. c. 1.

[27] Cæsar, lib. v. c. 14.

[28] As Constantine the Great; for such I consider to be the fair meaning of the orator's words addressed to him, speaking of Britannias, or the British Isles, "Tu etiam nobiles, illic oriendo, fecisti." Mr. Gibbon thinks this may refer to his accession; but the other opinion is the most natural construction; and so the foreign editor thought when he added the marginal note, "Nam in Britannia Constantinus natus fuit."

[29] Carausius, Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine, and others.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

saloons[30], and with mosaic pavements, and emulated every Roman improvement. They had distinguished themselves as legal advocates and orators[31], and for their study of the Roman poets.[32] Their cities had been made images of Rome itself, and the natives had become Romans.[33] The description of Caerleon in Wales is applicable to many others in Britain.[34] The ruins of Verulam, near St. Alban's, exhibited analogous signs of splendour and luxury[35]; and the numerous remains of habitations or towns built in the Roman fashion, which casual excavations are even yet every year, and sometimes every month, disclosing to our view, show that

30 Tacit. Vit. Ag. c. 21.

31 Hence Juvenal's "Gallia causidicos docuit facunda Britannos," Sat. 15. Gaul being their place of study.

32 So Martial intimates, "Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus." Ep.

33 Hence Gildas says, "Ita, ut non Britannia, sed Romania insula, censeretur," c. v. p. 3. He adds, that all their coins were stamped with the image of the emperor. Ibid.

34 Giraldus has left this account of its remains in the twelfth century. "It was elegantly built by the Romans with brick walls. Many vestiges of its ancient splendour still remain, and stately palaces, which formerly, with the gilt tiles, displayed the Roman grandeur. It was first built by the Roman nobility, and adorned with sumptuous edifices, with a lofty tower, curious hot baths, temples now in ruins, and theatres encompassed with stately walls, in part yet standing. The walls are three miles in circumference, and within these, as well as without, subterraneous buildings are frequently met with; as aqueducts, vaults, hypocausts, stoves," &c. Giral. Camb. Itin. Camb. p. 836.

35 One abbot of St. Alban's, before the conquest, found great subterraneous passages of the ancient city, Verulam, solidly arched and passing under the river, and tiles and stones, which he set apart for the building of a church. Mat. Par. Vit. Ab. p. 40. The next abbot exploring farther, met with the foundation of a great palace, and remains of many buildings, with some manuscripts. He discovered several stone floors, with tiles and columns fit for the intended church; and pitchers and vessels made of earth, and neatly shaped as with a wheel; and also vessels of glass, containing the ashes of the dead. He also met with several dilapidated temples, subverted altars, idols, and various coins. Mat. Par. ibid. p. 41.

Digitized by Google

Britain, at the time of the Saxon invasion, had become a wealthy, civilised, and luxurious country.[36] These epithets, however, whenever used, are but comparative phrases, and their precise meaning varies in every age, from the dawn of Egyptian civility to our own bright day. Britain did not in the fifth century possess our present affluence and civilisation, but those of a Roman province at that epoch. It had not our mind, or knowledge, or improvements, but it shared in all that Rome then possessed or valued. Gildas has been emphatically querulous in painting the desolations which it had endured before his time — the sixth century — from the Picts, the Irish, and the Saxons, and from its own civil fury; and yet, after all these evils had occurred, he describes it as containing twenty-eight cities, and some well-fortified castles, and speaks of the country with metaphors that seem intended to express both cultivation and abundance.[37] Bede, who lived two centuries after Gildas, does not subtract from his description; but on the contrary adds "nobilissimis" to his cities, and "innumera" to his castles[38], which Nennius above a century later repeats.[39]

[36] It is mentioned by the orator Eumenius, that when the father of Constantine the Great rebuilt Autun, he was chiefly furnished with workmen from Britain, "which abounded with the best builders." Eum. Pan. 8.

[37] Gildas, c. 1. The fecundity of the harvests of Britain, and the innumerable multitudes of its cattle and sheep, had been extolled by the Roman encomiast of Constantine. Paneg. Const. And we read in Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xviii. c. 2., and Zosimus, lib. iii., of corn being carried to Germany from Britain, by the Roman armies, as if from their granary. Permission had been granted by Probus to plant vines and make wine in Britain. Scrip. Aug. p. 942.; and see Henry's History, vol. ii. p. 106—112.

[38] Hist. Eccl. c. 1. p. 41. [39] Nenn. 3 Gale. p. 98.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

If our knowledge of the moral state of Britain at this period be taken from the vehement censures of Gildas, no country could be more worthless in its legal chieftains and religious directors, or in its general population. He says it had become a proverb, that the Britons were neither brave in war, nor faithful in peace; that adverse to peace and truth, they were bold in crimes and falsehood; that evil was preferred to good, and impiety to religion. That those who were most cruel were, though not rightfully, anointed kings; and were soon unjustly destroyed by others, fiercer than themselves. If any one discovered gentler manners or superior virtues, he became the more unpopular. Actions, pleasing or displeasing to the Deity, were held in equal estimation. It was not the laity only who were of this character; the clergy, he adds, who ought to have been an example to all, were addicted to intoxication, animosities, and quarrels.[40] He aggravates the features of this revolting picture, in his subsequent addresses to the British kings, whom he names, and for whom no epithet seems, in his opinion, to have been too severe; and to the clergy, on whom his vituperative powers of rhetoric and scripture-memory are exerted with unceremonious profusion; accusing them, besides their folly and impudence, of deceit, robbery, avarice, profligacy, gluttony, and almost every other vice: — "even," he adds, "that I may speak the truth, of infidelity."[41] He is angry enough with the Saxons,

[40] See his first tract de excidio Brit.

[41] See his last declamation against the ecclesiastical order of Britain, of which he yet says, before he dies, he sometimes wishes to be a member, "Ante mortem esse aliquandiu participem opto."

Digitized by Google

whom he calls Ambrones, Furciferi, and Lupi, "robbers, villains, and wolves;" but these are forbearing metaphors, compared with the flow of Latin abuse which he pours first on all the British kings generally, and then specially on Constantine, "the tyrannical cub of the lioness of Devonshire;" on the other "lion's whelp," Aurelius Conan, "like the pard in colour and morals, though with a hoary head;" on Vortiper, "the stupid tyrant of South Wales, the bear-driver," and what his words seem to imply, "the bear-baiter;" on Cuneglas, whose name he is pleased with recollecting, implies the "yellow bull-dog;" and on Maglocune, "the dragon of the island," the most powerful and "the worst" of all.[42] But the very excess and coarseness of the invectives of Gildas, display such a cynicism of mind and atrabilious feeling in himself, as not only to show that he partook of the dispositions he reprehends, but also that he has so much exaggerated the actual truth, that we cannot disencumber it from his spleen, his malice, or his hyperboles. Bede has condescended to adopt a few sentences from his inculpations; but Nennius has not copied them; nor has Mark the hermit, one of the last-known revisers of Nennius,

[42] It is his epistola in which these expressions occur, with copious commentaries of the same tendency. I am rather inclined to think, that one of the passages against Maglocune, alludes to his having aided Mordred against the celebrated Arthur. "Nonne in primis adolescentiæ tuæ annis, AVUNCULUM REGEM *cum fortissimis prope modum militibus*, quorum vultus, non catulorum leonis in acie magnopere dispares, visebantur, acerrime, ense, hasta, igni oppressisti." The chronology suits Arthur, and the king with his brave militibus, whose countenances in battle were not much unlike lion's whelps, will sound like remarkable expressions, to those who cherish the romances on Arthur and his knights.

Digitized by Google

BOOK II.

inserted them.[43] Yet so many features of moral depravity in the Roman empire at this period are described by Salvian, who witnessed and detailed them, that however unwilling we are to adopt the violent abuse and repulsive rhetoric of Gildas, there is too much reason to fear, that many of the

[43] Of the small history of the Britons, usually ascribed to Nennius, the Rev. W. Gunn has recently (1819) published an edition from a MS. in the Vatican, that seems to be of the age of the tenth century, where it bears the name of Mark the Anchorite. "Incipit Historia Brittonum edita ab anachoreta Marco ejusdem gentis seto Epo. p. 46. The original is on parchment, fairly written in double columns, and fills ten pages of a miscellaneous volume of the folio size." Gunn's Pref. It once belonged to Christina, the celebrated queen of Sweden. The two MSS. of this work in the British Museum, Vitel. A. 13., and Vespas. D. 21., have the name of Nennius as the author. So has the MS. of the Hengwrt library. The Bodleian MS., No. 2016., now No. 163., makes Gildas its author: "A Gilda sapiente composita." Of the new MS. Mr. Gunn justly says, "It varies not as to general import from the copies already known. It differs from those edited by Gale and Bertram in certain transpositions of the subject; in the omission of two introductory prefaces; in not acknowledging the assistance of Samuel Bewly, the reputed master of Nennius; and in detaching the life of St. Patrick from the body of the work, and placing it at the end." Pref. xxiv. It is, in fact, the former work dislocated and curtailed. I think these alterations quite sufficient to account for Mark having put his own name to the transcript he so varied. This MS. makes one of its latest computation of dates in 946, and the fifth year of Edmund, the Anglo-Saxon king, p. 45. But this year is afterwards protracted to 994, pp. 62. and 80. The dates of all the copies are inconsistent. Mark by his date has varied that of Nennius, which in the MSS. used by Gale was 800, and in the Hengwrt MS. 796, and in c. xi. is made 876. This would imply that the chronicle had both earlier authors and revisals than Mark. Jeffry quotes Gildas frequently as a writer of some history which we have not; and as this history of Nennius has had the name of Gildas prefixed to it, and bears so many marks of dislocated passages and changes of its date, I am tempted to think that it is an old chronicle revised and altered by several hands. Gildas may have made the first sketch of part of it. His work, Nennius in the ninth century may have abridged and carried on, and Mark in the next age have added his revisal. It is clear that the history of Nennius is not the whole work of Gildas to which Jeffry alludes, because it does not contain the incident to which he refers. It is therefore either an extract or a different work.

Digitized by Google

deformities which his coarse daubing has distorted almost into incredibility, degraded the character and accelerated the downfal of our ancient British predecessors.[44]

CHAP. VIII.

[44] See Salv. de Gub. 44, 5, 6, 7.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX

TO

BOOK II.

THE MANNERS OF THE SAXONS IN THEIR PAGAN STATE.

CHAP. I.

The Character and Persons of the most ancient SAXONS.

CHAP. I.

WE may now pause to consider the most prominent features of the Saxons before they established themselves in Britain.

THE Anglo-Saxons came to England from the Germanic continent; and above a century had elapsed from their first settlements before they received those improvements and changes which followed the introduction of the Christian system. These circumstances make it necessary to exhibit them as they were in their continental and pagan state, before they are delineated with the features, and in the dress of Christianity.

IT would be extremely desirable to give a complete portrait of our ancestors in their uncivilised state; but this is an epocha in the history of the human mind which in former times seldom interested any one, and has not been faithfully detailed. Hence on this subject curiosity must submit to be disappointed. The converted Anglo-Saxon remembered the practices of his idolatrous ancestors with

Digitized by Google

too much abhorrence, to record them for the notice of future ages; and as we have no Runic spells to call the pagan warrior from his grave, we can only see him in those imperfect sketches which patient industry may collect from the passages scattered in the works which time has spared. CHAP. I.

THE character of the ancient Saxons displayed the qualities of fearless, active, and successful pirates. It is not merely the Spanish churchman,[1] Orosius, who remarks them as dreadful for their courage and agility, but the emperor Julian, who had lived among barbarians, and who had fought with some Saxon tribes, denotes them as distinguished amongst their neighbours for vehemence and valour.[2] Zosimus, their contemporary, expresses the general feeling of his age, when he ranks them as superior to others in energy, strength, and warlike fortitude.[3]

THEIR ferocious[4] qualities were nourished by the habit of indiscriminate depredation. It was from the cruelty and destructiveness, as well as from the suddenness of their incursions, that they were dreaded more than any other people. Like the Danes and Norwegians, their successors and assailants, they desolated where they plundered with the sword and flame.[5]

IT was consistency in such men to be inattentive to danger. They launched their predatory vessels, and suffered the wind to blow them to any foreign coast, indifferent whether the result was a depredation unresisted, or the deathful conflict. Such was their cupidity, or their brutal hardihood, that they often preferred embarking in the tempest which might shipwreck them, because at such a season their victims would be more unguarded. Their

[1] Orosius, lib. vii. c. 32.

[2] Julian Imp. Orat. de laud. Const. p. 116.

[3] Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 147. ed. Ox.

[4] Salvian says, gens Saxonum fera est, de Gub. Dei, lib. iv. V. Fortunatus calls them "aspera gens, vivens quasi more ferino," 8 Mag. Bib. 787.; and Sidonius has the strong expression of "omni hosti truculentior," lib. viii. c. 7. Even in the eighth century the Saxons on the continent are described by Eginhard as "natura feroces," p. 4.

[5] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

warfare did not originate from the more generous, or the more pardonable of man's evil passions. It was the offspring of the basest. Their swords were not unsheathed by ambition or resentment. The love of plunder and of cruelty was their favourite habit; and hence they attacked, indifferently, every coast which they could reach.[6]

INLAND provinces were not protected from their invasion. From ignorance, necessity, or policy, they traversed the ocean in boats, framed of osiers, and covered with skins sewed together; and such was their skill or their prodigality of life, that in these they sported in the tempests of the German Ocean.[7]

IT is possible that men who had seen the vessels in which the Francs had escaped from the Pontus, and who had been twice instructed by imperial usurpers in the naval art, might have constructed more important war ships, if their judgment had approved. Although their isles, and their maritime provinces of Ditmarsia and Stormaria, were barren of wood, yet Holsatia abounded with it; and if their defective land-carriage prevented the frequency of this supply, the Elbe was at hand to float down inexhaustible stores from the immense forests of Germany.

THEY may have preferred their light skiffs[8], from an experience of their superior utility. When their fatal incursions had incited the Romans to fortify and to garrison the frontier of Britain and Gaul, the Saxons directed their enmity against the inland regions. For their peculiar vessels no coast was too shallow, no river too small; they dared to ascend the streams for eighty or an hundred miles; and if other plunder invited, or danger pressed, they

[6] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3., xxvii. c. 8. Sid. Apoll.

[7] That this ocean was anciently dangerous from its tempests, Boniface, the self-devoted missionary of Germany, often states: periculosum est navigantibus, p. 52. Germanici tempestatibus maris undique quassantibus fatigati senis miserere, p. 59. vol. xvi. Bib. Mag. Patrum.

[8] On the vessels of the Saxons, see Du Bos, Hist. Crit. de la Mon. de France, i. p. 150. — Mioparo, quasi minimus paro; idem et carabus. Est parva scapha ex vimine facta, quæ contexta crudo corio genus navigii præbet. Isidorus Orig. lib. xix. c. 1.

Digitized by Google

carried their vessels from one river to another, and thus escaped with facility from the most superior foe.[9]

Of the Saxons, an author of the fifth century says to a friend who was opposed to them, "You see as many piratical leaders as you behold rowers, for they all command, obey, teach, and learn the art of pillage. Hence, after your greatest caution, still greater care is requisite. This enemy is fiercer than any other; if you be unguarded, they attack; if prepared, they elude you. They despise the opposing, and destroy the unwary; if they pursue, they overtake; if they fly, they escape. Shipwrecks discipline them, not deter; they do not merely know, they are familiar with all the dangers of the sea; a tempest gives them security and success, for it divests the meditated land of the apprehension of a descent. In the midst of waves and threatening rocks they rejoice at their peril, because they hope to surprise."[10]

As their naval expeditions, though often wildly daring, were much governed by the policy of surprise, so their land incursions were sometimes conducted with all the craft of robbers. "Dispersed into many bodies," says Zosimus, of one of their confederates, "they plundered by night, and when day appeared, they concealed themselves in the woods, feasting on the booty they had gained."[11] They are, however, seldom mentioned by the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries without some epithets which express a superiority over other men in their achievements or their courage.

The ferocity of the Saxon character would seem to suit better the dark and melancholy physiognomies of Asia and Africa, than the fair, pleasing, and blue-eyed countenances by which our ancestors are described.[12] But though nature had supplied them with the germs of those amiable qualities which have become the national character of their

[9] See Du Bos, 149. 2 Gibbon, 524.

[10] Sid. Apoll. Epist. vi. lib. 8.

[11] Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 149. This tribe whom he calls Quadi, Marcellinus, lib. xvii. c. 8., more correctly names Chamavi. These robbers were destroyed by one Chariette, a Franc, who organised some corps on the same plan.

[12] Sidon. Apoll. lib. viii. ep. 9. Bede, lib. ii. c. 1. The expressions applied by Tacitus to all the German nations are "truces, et cerulei oculi."

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

descendants, their direful customs, their acquired passions, and barbarous education, perverted every good propensity. So ductile is the human capacity, that there is no colour, climate, or constitution, which governs the moral character so permanently as the good or evil habits and discipline to which it is subjected. An incident mentioned by Symmachus shows that they had a pride of mind which could not endure disgrace. He says that twenty-nine Saxons strangled themselves to avoid being brought into a theatre for a gladiatorial show.[13]

THEIR persons were of the largest size. On the continent they were so proud of their forms and their descent, and so anxious to perpetuate them, that they were averse to marriages with other nations.[14] Hence the colour of the hair of their males is mentioned as uniform. In the fourth century they cut their hair so close to the skin, that the appearance of the head was diminished and the face enlarged.[15] In the following ages, their hair behind is mentioned as diffused upon their shoulders[16]; and an ancient Saxon law punished the man who seized another by the hair.[17]

IN their dress, their loose linen vests were adorned with trimming, woven in different colours.[18] Their external garment was the sagum, or cloak[19], and they had shoes.

[13] Ep. xlvi. lib. 2. p. 90.

[14] Meginh. ib. ap. Lang. Script. Dan. tom. ii. p. 39. Wittichind. p. 5. Tacitus had expressed the same of all the German tribes.

[15] Cujus vertices extimas per oras
Non contenta suos tenere morsus
Arctat lamina marginem comarum
Et sic crinibus ad cutem recisis
Decrescit caput, additurque vultus.
Sid. Ap.

[15] Wittichind, p. 5.

[17] 1 Linden. Codex Legum, p. 474.

[18] Paul. Warnefrid de Gest. Langob. lib. iv. c. 23. p. 838. Grot. ed. The vest is mentioned in the old Saxon law, p. 474., and their idol, Crodus, had one. — Fabric. Hist. Sax. tom. i. p. 61.

[19] Wittichind, p. 5.; and see Lindenbrog Glossary, Voc. Sagum, and Weiss. The curious may see a description of the dress of a Franc in the Monk of St. Gall's life of Charlemagne, and of a Longobard in P. Warnefridus, lib. iv. c. 23.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

Their females had gowns, and several ornaments for the arms, hands, and neck.[20]

THE SAXONS who invaded Thuringia in the sixth century, are described by Wittichind as leaning on small shields, with long lances, and with great knives, or crooked swords, by their sides.[21] Fabricius, an author of the sixteenth century, saw in an ancient picture of a Saxon, a sword bent into a semilunar shape.[22] He adds, that their shields were suspended by chains, that their horsemen used long iron sledge-hammers[23], and that their armour was heavy. I have not met with the documents from which he took these circumstances.

[20] One is called in the old Anglian law the Rhedo, to the stealing of which the same penalty was attached as to stealing six sows with pig. The mother, in the same law, might at her death leave to her son, land, slaves, and money; to her daughter, the ornaments of the neck; id est, muræenas (*necklaces*), nuscas, monilia (*collars*), inaures (*ear-rings*), vestes, armillas (*bracelets*), vel quicquid ornamenti proprii videbatur habuisse. 1. Lindenb. p. 484.

[21] Wittichind, 5. As Tacitus remarks that the Germans seldom had swords, and more generally javelins, there is some plausibility in the derivation of the Saxon name from their sachs, or peculiar swords. The Cimbri, on the contrary, had great and long swords, according to Plutarch, in his Life of Marius.

[22] Fabric. i. p. 66.

[23] The favourite weapon of Thor, according to the Northern Eddas, was a mallet.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

The Government and Laws of the more ancient SAXONS.

CHAP. II.

IT is said by Aristotle, that whoever lives voluntarily out of civil society must have a vicious disposition, or be an existence superior to man.[1] But nature has endeavoured to preserve her noblest offspring from this dismal and flagitious independence. She has given us faculties which can be only used, and wants which can be only provided for in society. She has made the social union inseparable from our safety, our virtue, our pride, and our felicity.

GOVERNMENT and laws must have been coeval with society, for they are essentially necessary to its continuance. A spacious edifice might as well be expected to last without cement or foundation, as a society to subsist without some regulations of individual will, and some acknowledged authority to enforce their observance.

THE Athenian philosopher has correctly traced the progress of our species towards political institutions. The connubial union is one of the most imperious and most acceptable laws of our frame. From this arose families and relationships. Families enlarged into villages and towns, and an aggregation of these gave being to a state.[2]

A FAMILY is naturally governed by its parents, and its ramifications by the aged. The father, says Homer, is the legislator to his wife and children.[3] Among most barbarous tribes, the aged ancestors have prescribed to the community the rules of mutual behaviour, and have adjudged disputes. As population has multiplied, civilisation

[1] Aristotle's Politic. lib. i. c. 2. p. 380. ed. 1606.

[2] Aristot. lib. i. c. 3. p. 381. This is one of Aristotle's most valuable works, and will repay with great profit a careful attention.

[3] Cited by Aristot. ibid. p. 379.

Digitized by Google

advanced, and the sphere of human activity has been enlarged, more precise regulations, more decided subordination, and more complicated governments became necessary, and have been established.

THAT the Saxon societies, in their early stages, were governed by the aged, is very strikingly shown in the fact, that the words of their language which denote authority, also express age. When it states that Joseph was appointed ruler over Egypt, the words are, "ſette into ealdne ovep Ægýpta land."[4] For Cæsar, the emperor, we have "Caſepaſ tha beoth cýninga yldeſt."[5] Here eldest is used as synonymous to greatest. A British general is called an "ealdopman."[6] The Latin term satrapa, by which Bede expressed the ruling Saxon chief of a district on the Continent, is rendered by his royal translator, "ealdopman."[7] The phrase of "a certain ruler," in St. Luke, is, in the Saxon Gospel, "ſum aldop."[8] The contest between the disciples of Christ which should be the greatest, is expressed in the Saxon, which should be the yldeſt.[9] The aged were the primitive chiefs and governors, among the Saxons, and therefore the terms expressing age were used to denote dignity so habitually that they were retained in common phrase, even after the custom of connecting power with seniority had become obsolete.

THE most ancient account of the Saxon government on the Continent exists in this short but expressive passage of Bede: "The ancient Saxons have no king, but many chiefs set over their people, who, when war presses, draw lots equally; and whomsoever the chance points out, they all

4 Genesis, xlv. v. 8., in Thwaite's Saxon Heptateuch.

5 So the pontifex is called yldeſta biſceop, Orosius, lib. v. c. 4.

6 Sax. Chron. 7 Smith's edition of Bede, p. 624.

8 Luke, xviii. v. 18. So the highest seats in the synagogue are called tha yldeſtan ſetl, Luke, xx. 46. The Saxons had yldeſt ýſhta for the chief workman, yldeſt picing for the chief of pirates, on ſcýpe yldoſt for a pilot, yldeſt on tham ýfelan flocce for prince of that evil flock. So Bede's "he who by the priority of seat seemed to be their chief," lib. v. c. 13., is rendered by Alfred ſe pe ſet ſetlep yldeſt et me thuhte tha he heopa aldop beon ſceolde, p. 633.

9 Luke, xxii. v. 24.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

follow as leader, and obey during the war. The war concluded, all the chiefs become again of equal power."[10]

That the continental Saxons in the eighth and preceding centuries were under an aristocracy of chieftains, and had no kings but in war; and that the war-kings who were then chosen laid aside their power when peace was re-established, is attested by other ancient authorities.[11] More recent historians have repeated the assertion.[12] Cæsar gives an account nearly similar of the German magistracy in his time.[13] We may, therefore, safely infer, that when the Anglo-Saxons visited England, they came under war-kings. The reigns of Hengist, and of the founders of the dynasties of the Octarchy, were so many periods of continued warfare, and their immediate posterity were assailed with hostility from the natives almost perpetual. The Anglo-Saxons were under a necessity of continuing their war-kings, until at length a permanent, though a limited, monarchy was established. Their chiefs, or witena, continued in their

[10] Bede Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 10. p. 192.

[11] The ancient Saxon poet says,

Quæ nec rege fuit saltem sociata sub uno
Ut se militiæ pariter defenderet usu;
Sed variis divisa modis plebs omnis habebat,
Quot pagos, tot pene duces. Du Chesne.

Si autem universale bellum ingrueret, sorte eligitur cui omnes obedire oporteat ad administrandum imminens bellum. Quo peracto, æquo jure ac lege propria contentus potestate unusquisque vivebat. — Wittichind, lib. i. p. 7. So the Vetus Theotisce Chronicon on the year 810. Twelff Edelinge der Sassen dereden over dat lant tho Sassen. Und Wannere dat se krich in dat lant, tho Sassen hadden so koren se von den twelffen einen, de was ore Koning de wile de krich warde. Und wan de krich bericht wart, so weren de twelffe gelick, so was des einen koniges state uth, und was den anderon gelick. — Lindenb. Gloss. 1347. This is "Twelve Ethelings governed over the land of the Saxons; and whenever war arose in that land, the Saxons chose one of the twelve to be king while the war lasted: when the war was finished the twelve became alike."

[12] Krantz Metropol. lib. i. c. 1., and Belli Dithmar. p. 431. Fabricius Hist. Sax. i. p. 69. Sagittarius Hist. Bard. 60.

[13] Quum bellum civitas aut illatum defendit aut infert, magistratus qui eo bello præsint, ut vitæ necisque habeant, potestatem deliguntur. In pace nullus est communis magistratus, sed principes regionum atque pagorum inter suos jus dicunt controversiasque minuunt. — De Bell. Gall. lib. vi. c. 21.

Digitized by Google

influence and power. They elected the king, though they chose him from the family of the deceased sovereign; and their consent in their gemot continued to be necessary to the more important acts of his authority.

THERE were four orders of men among the ancient Saxons: the Etheling or noble, the free man, the freed man, and the servile. The nobles were jealous of their race and rank. Nobles married nobles only, and the severest penalties prohibited intrusions of one rank into the others.[14]

OF their laws in their Pagan state, very little can be detailed from authority sufficiently ancient. From the uniformity of their principles of legislation in continental Saxony and in England, and in a subsequent age, we may infer that pecuniary compensation was their general mode of redressing personal injuries, and of punishing criminal offences. This feature certainly announces that the spirit of legislation began to be understood, and that the sword of punishment had been wrested, by the government, out of the hand of the vindictive individual. It also displays a state of society in which property was accumulating. It is, however, a form of punishment which is adapted to the first epochas of civilisation only; because as wealth is more generally possessed, pecuniary mulcts become legal impunity.

THEIR severity against adultery was personal and sanguinary. If a woman became unchaste, she was compelled to hang herself, her body was burnt, and over her ashes the adulterer was executed. Or else a company of females whipped her from district to district, and, dividing her garments to the girdle, they pierced her body with their knives. They drove her, thus bleeding, from their habitations; and wheresoever she went, new collections of women renewed the cruel punishment, till she expired.[15] This dreadful custom shows that the savage character of the

[14] Meginhard, 2 Lang. p. 40. Nithardus, lib. iv. Hucbald Vita B. Lebuini, Act. Sanct. vol. vi. p. 282. and Wittichind.

[15] Boniface describes this custom in his letter to Ethelbald, the king of Mercia, in Mag. Bibl. Patrum, tom. xvi. p. 55.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

nation was not confined to the males. Female chastity is indeed a virtue as indispensable as it is attractive; but its proper guardians are the maternal example and tuition, the constitutional delicacy of the female mind, its native love of honour, and the uncorrupted voice and feeling of society. If it can be only maintained by the horrors of a Saxon punishment, the nation is too barbarous, or too contaminated, to be benefited by the penalty.

In their marriages they allowed a son to wed his father's widow, and a brother his sister-in-law.[16]

From one of the laws of their confederates, the Frisians, who were among the tribes that settled in England, we learn that their religious establishment was protected by penalties as terrible as those which guarded their chastity. "Whoever breaks into a temple, and takes away any of the sacred things, let him be led to the sea, and in the sand which the tide usually covers, let his ears be cut off, let him be castrated, and immolated to the gods whose temples he has violated."[17]

[16] Sax. Chron. Bede, i. c. 27. p. 64.
[17] Lex Fris. ap. 1. Lindenb. p. 508.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

The Religion of the SAXONS *in their Pagan State.*

CHAP. III.

AT this happy period of the world, we cannot reflect on the idolatry of ancient times without some astonishment at the infatuation which has so inveterately, in various regions, clouded the human mind. We feel, indeed, that it is impossible to contemplate the grand canopy of the universe; to descry the planets moving in governed order; to find comets darting from system to system in an orbit of which a space almost incalculable is the diameter; to discover constellations beyond constellations in endless multiplicity, and to have indications of the light of others whose full beam of splendour has not yet reached us; we feel it impossible to meditate on these innumerable theatres of existence without feeling with awe, that this amazing magnificence of nature announces an Author tremendously great. But it is very difficult to conceive how the lessons of the skies should have taught that localising idolatry, which their transcendent grandeur, and almost infinite extent, seem expressly calculated to destroy.

THE most ancient religions of the world appear to have been pure theism, with neither idols nor temples. These essential agents in the political mechanism of idolatry were unknown to the ancient Pelasgians, from whom the Grecians chiefly sprung, and to the early Egyptians and Romans. The Jewish patriarchs had them not, and even our German ancestors, according to Tacitus, were without them.

IN every nation but the Jewish a more gross system of superstition was gradually established. The Deity was dethroned by the symbols which human folly selected as his representatives; the most ancient of these were the

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

heavenly bodies, the most pardonable objects of erring adoration. But when it was found possible to make superstition a profitable craft, then departed heroes and kings were exalted into gods. Delirious fancy soon added others so profusely, that the air, the sea, the rivers, the woods, and the earth became so stocked with divinities, that it was easier, as an ancient sage remarked, to find a deity than a man.

But if we meditate more profoundly on the subject, we may infer that polytheism and idolatry were in part the effects of human pride throwing off all superior tuition; and in part the natural progress of the human mind towards knowlege, and in reasoning. They were erroneous deductions, but they were, in some of their authors, mistaken efforts at improvement. As the intellect became more exercised, and the sensibilities awakened, and as vice began to spread, the idea arose in some that the adored Supreme was so great, and man so unworthy, that human beings, or concerns, could not be objects of his divine attention. In others a desire began, to withdraw from the sovereignty of a Being so perfect and so holy, that the pleasures of the body might be indulged with less restriction and remorse. Hence every supposition was encouraged that favoured the wish of mankind to have deities more resembling their own imperfections; and the theory of our world being consigned to inferior divinities more like our feeble selves, was a welcomed suggestion, because it attempted to reconcile the perception of the exalted majesty of the Deity with the feeling of the daily misconduct and follies of the human race. Mankind would neither deny his existence, nor disbelieve his providence, nor could they live in comfort without believing both; and polytheism was therefore patronised by the refining and self-indulging religious intellect, as a supposition calculated to unite both these truths, and to satisfy the doubts of the scrupulous and inquisitive. At first the new fancies were venerated as the ministers and delegates of the Supreme. But as new distinctions and caprices succeeded, and especially after the custom of allegorising natural phenomena prevailed, the invented deities

Digitized by Google

were multiplied, and connected with all the departments and agencies of nature. Hero-worship emerged from their belief of the soul's immortality, and was in time added to that excess of posthumous gratitude and veneration to which mankind are always prone. These follies seem to have been a natural consequence of man's deserting the Divine guidance, as we cannot have any authentic knowlege of the creation, providence, and will of an Almighty Ruler, but from his own revelations of these awful mysteries. The human race had no choice but to believe and to preserve faithfully all that he had communicated to them, and to be governed by its tuition. But when once the taste and habit had become popular, of turning from His grand and simple truths to create and prefer the speculations of Man's own ignorance and conjecture, error and falsehood were the inevitable results of such unfortunate misconduct; the mind became blinded and debased by its own theories, and the world was filled with superstition and absurdity.

The use of idols was an attempt to solace the mind, to excite the memory, interest the feelings, and fix the attention by a visible image of the invisible Omnipresence. In all religious countries they have been found to be efficacious for these purposes, especially with the less intellectual. But in all, both polytheism and idolatry tend at last to fix the mind almost exclusively on their own false imaginations, to deprave the reasoning faculty, to supersede the adoration of the universal Parent, and to occasion the most deplorable superstitions and tyrannical persecutions. The continuing advance of the human mind then led to the abolition of both these fictitious systems as steadily as it originally suggested them. When our Saxon ancestors had settled themselves in England they used both. They had many gods, and they venerated their images; but that the progress of their manly intellect was fast operating to shake the attachment to the national superstitions, we may infer from the candour with which they listened to the first Christian missionaries, and from the rapidity with which they adopted the Christian faith.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

THERE is a beauty in the name appropriated by the Saxon and German nations to the Deity which is not equalled by any other, except his most venerated Hebrew appellation. The Saxons call him GOD, which is literally THE GOOD; the same word signifying both the Deity and his most endearing quality.

THE peculiar system of the Anglo-Saxons is too imperfectly known to us for its stages to be discriminated, or its progress detailed. It appears to have been of a very mixed nature, and to have been so long in existence as to have attained a regular establishment and much ceremonial pomp.

THAT when they settled in Britain they had idols, altars, temples, and priests; that their temples were surrounded with inclosures; that they were profaned if lances were thrown into them; and that it was not lawful for a priest to bear arms, or to ride but on a mare; we learn from the unquestionable authority of our venerable Bede.[1]

SOME of the subjects of their adoration we find in their names for the days of the week.

Sunday,	or Sunnan dæg,	is the	Sun's day.
Monday,	or Monan dæg,	is	Moon's day.
Tuesday,	or Tiwes dæg,	is	Tiw's day.
Wednesday,	or Wodnes dæg,	is	Woden's day.
Thursday,	or Thunres dæg,	is	Thunre's day.
Friday,	or Frige dæg,	is	Friga's day.
Saturday,	or Seternes dæg,	is	Seterne's day.[2]

Of the sun and moon we can only state, that their sun was

[1] Bede, lib. ii. c. 13. et 9.; lib. ii. c. 6. Pope Gregory mentions, that if their pagan temples were well built, they might be used for Christian churches, lib. i. c. 30. Their name for idol was gig, and for altar gigbed, the table or bed of the idol. The word gig hilde signifies war, and this may imply either that the idol was a warrior or the god of war.

[2] I take the Saxon names of the days of the week from the Cotton MS. Tiberius A. 3. They may be also found in the Saxon Gospels, p. 24 S. 72 M. 55 T. 48 W. 49 Th. 28 F. 52 S. As Thon means also a mountain, his name may have some connection with the ancient Eastern custom of worshipping on mountains and hills. He was called the god of thunder; hence is named Thunne. The word Thon seems to imply the mountain deity.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

a female deity, and their moon was of the male sex[3]: of their Tiw, we know nothing but his name. Woden was the great ancestor from whom they deduced their genealogies. It will be hereafter shown that the calculations from the Saxon pedigrees place Woden in the third century.[4] Of the Saxon Woden, his wife Friga, and of Thunr, or Thor, we know very little, and it would not be very profitable to detail all the reveries which have been published about them. The Odin, Frigg, or Friga, and Thor, of the Northmen, were obviously the same characters; though we may hesitate to ascribe to the Saxon deities the apparatus and mythology which the Northern scalds of subsequent ages have transmitted to us from Denmark, Iceland, and Norway. Woden was the predominant idol of the Saxon adoration, but we can state no more of him but so far as we describe the Odin of the Danes and Norwegians.[5]

[3] The same peculiarity of genders prevailed in the ancient Northern language. Edda Semundi, p. 14. It is curious, that in the passage of the Arabian poet, cited by Pocock, in not. ad Carmen Tograi, p. 13., we meet with a female sun and masculine moon. The distich is,

Nec nomen femininum soli dedecus,
Nec masculinum lunæ gloria.

So the Caribbees think the moon a man, and therefore make it masculine, and call it Noneim. Breton's Gram. Carabb. p. 20. So the Hindu Chandra, or moon, is a male deity. 2 A. R. 127. The priests of Ceres called the moon Apis, and also Taurus. Porph. de Ant. Reg. 119. Cæsar mentions that the Germans worshipped the sun and moon, lib. vi. c. 19. In the Saxon treatise on the vernal equinox we have their peculiar genders of these bodies displayed. "When the sun goeth at evening under this earth, then is the earth's breadth between us and the sun; so that we have not *her* light till *she* rises up at the other end." Of the moon it says, "always *he* turns *his* ridge to the sun."—"The moon hath no light but of the sun, and *he* is of all stars the lowest." — Cotton MS. Tib. A. iii. p. 63.

[4] Perhaps hleothor, the Saxon for oracle, may have some reference to Thor. Þleo means a shady place, or an asylum. Þleothor is literally the retirement of Thor. Þleothor cyðe means the saying of an oracle, Þleothorstede the place of an oracle.

[5] Without imitating those who have lately fancied that there never was an Odin, and that he is merely a mythological personage, the name of a deity, we may remark, that the date of Odin's appearance in the North cannot be accurately ascertained. This difficulty has arisen partly from the confusion in which, from their want of chronology, all the incidents of the North,

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

THE names of two of the Anglo-Saxon goddesses have been transmitted to us by Bede. He mentions RHEDA, to whom they sacrificed in March, which, from her rites, received the appellation of Rheb-monath; and EOSTRE, whose festivities were celebrated in April, which thence obtained the name of Eoſtre-monath.[6] Her name is still retained to express the season of our great pascal solemnity: and thus the memory of one of the idols of our ancestors will be perpetuated as long as our language and country continue. Their name for a goddess was ȝyðena; and as the word is applied as a proper name instead of Vesta[7], it is not unlikely that they had a peculiar divinity so called.

THE idol adored in Heligland, one of the islands originally occupied by the Saxons, was FOSETE, who was so celebrated that the place became known by his name; it was called Foſeteſland. Temples were there built to him, and the country was deemed so sacred, that none dared to touch any animal which fed on it, nor to draw water from

anterior to the eighth century, are involved, and partly from the wild and discordant fictions of the scalds, who have clouded the history of Odin by their fantastic mythology. The same obscurity attends the heroes of all countries who have been deified after death, and upon whose memory the poets have taken the trouble to scatter the weeds as well as the flowers of their fancy. The human existence of Odin appears to me to be satisfactorily proved by two facts: 1st, The founders of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy deduced their descent from Odin by genealogies in which the ancestors are distinctly mentioned up to him. These genealogies have the appearance of greater authenticity by not being the servile copies of each other; they exhibit to us different individuals in the successive stages of the ancestry of each, and they claim different children of Odin as the founders of the lines. These genealogies are also purely Anglo-Saxon. 2d, The other circumstance is, that the Northern chroniclers and scalds derive their heroes also from Odin by his different children. Snorre, in his Ynglinga Saga, gives a detailed history of Sweden regularly from him; and though the Northerns cannot be suspected of having borrowed their genealogies from the Anglo-Saxons, yet they agree in some of the children ascribed to Odin. This coincidence between the genealogies preserved in their new country of men who left the North in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the genealogies of the most celebrated heroes who acted in the North during the subsequent ages, could not have arisen if there never had been an Odin who left such children. I have already expressed my opinion, that the Anglo-Saxon genealogies lead us to the most probable date of Odin's arrival in the North.

[6] Bede, de Temporum Ratione, in his works, vol. ii. p. 81.

[7] See Saxon Dictionary, voc. Ȝyðena.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. LII.

a fountain which flowed there, unless in awful silence. In the eighth century, Willebrord, a converted Anglo-Saxon, born in Northumbria, who, under the auspices of his uncle Boniface, went missionary to Friesland, endeavoured to destroy the superstition, though Radbod, the fierce king of the island, devoted to a cruel death all who violated it. Willebrord, fearless of the consequences, baptized three men in the fountain, invoking the Trinity, and caused some cattle who were feeding there to be killed for the food of his companions. The surrounding pagans expected them to have been struck dead or insane.[8]

That the Angles had a goddess whom they called Hertha, or mother Earth, we learn from Tacitus. He says, that in an island in the ocean there was a grove, within which was a vehicle covered with a garment, which it was permitted to the priest alone to touch. The goddess was presumed to be within it, and was carried, by cows, with great veneration. Joy, festivity, and hospitality were then universal. Wars and weapons were forgotten, and peace and quiet reigned, then only known, then only loved, until the priest returned the goddess to her temple, satiated with mortal converse. The vehicle, the garment, and the goddess herself, were washed in a secret lake. Slaves ministered, who were afterwards drowned.[9]

The Saxons dreaded an evil being, whom they named Faul[10]; some kind of female power they called an elf, who is very frequently used as a complimentary simile to their ladies. Thus Judith is said to be elf ſcinu, shining as an elf.[11] They also venerated stones, groves, and fountains.[12] The continental Saxons respected the lady

[8] Alcuini vita S. Willebrord in his works, p. 1438., or in Sanct. Hist. Col. vol. vi. p. 130. Charles Martel conquered Radbod, and added the island to his dominions, ibid. Saint Liudger, who died in 809, destroyed the temples of Fosete. See his life by Altfridus, who was alive in 848, in Act. Sanct. Bolland. March. tom. iii. p. 646.

[9] Tacit. de Mor. German.

[10] That Faul might not hurt, was part of one of their exorcisms. See Sax. Dict. voce Faul.

[11] So Judith, p. 21.

[12] See Meginhard. Conrad Usperg. Wilkins, 83. Linden. Gloss. 1473.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Hera, a fancied being, who was believed to fly about in the air in the week after their Jule, or between our Christmas and Epiphany. Abundance was thought to follow her visit.[13] We may add that Hilde, one of their terms for battle, seems to allude to a war-goddess of that name.

THAT the Saxons had many idols, appears from several authors. Gregory, in the eighth century, addressing the old Saxons, exhorts them to abandon their idols, whether of gold, silver, brass, stone, or any other kind.[14] Hama, Flinnus, Siba, and Zernebogus, or the black, malevolent, ill-omened deity, are said to have occupied part of their superstitions, but we cannot be answerable for more than their names.[15] A Saxon Venus has been also mentioned; she is exhibited as standing naked in a car, with myrtle round her head, a lighted torch in her breast, and the figure of the world in her right hand. But this description implies too much refinement in its allusions, and the authority is not decisive.[16]

THE account of Crodus has stronger marks of authenticity; it seems to have been preserved in the Brunswick

[13] Gobelin ap. Meibom. Irminsula, p. 12. We may add that Bede, in his commentary on Luke, mentions demons appearing to men as females, and to women as men, whom, he says, the Gauls call Dusii, the presumed origin of our word deuce. Hincmar, in 16 Bib. Mag. 561. But he does not say that these demons were part of the Saxon paganism. There were two personages feared in the North, whom we may mention here, as words from their names have become familiar to ourselves: one was Ochus Bochus, a magician and demon; the other was Neccus, a malign deity who frequented the waters. If any perished in whirlpools, or by cramp, or bad swimming, he was thought to be seized by Neccus. Steel was supposed to expel him, and therefore all who bathed threw some little pieces of steel in the water for that purpose. Verel. Suio-Goth. p. 13. It is probable that we here see the origin of hocus pocus, and Old Nick.

[14] 16 Bib. Mag. 101.

[15] Fabricius Hist. Sax. p. 62. Verstigan describes the idol Flynt as the image of death in a sheet, holding a torch, and placed on a great flint-stone. He was also represented as a man in a great cloak, with a lion on his head and shoulders, and carrying a torch. His figure was sometimes more deformed, with monstrous feet. It had a crown on its head. Montf. Ant. Exp. c. 10.

[16] Gyraldus says he read of this idol in the Saxon histories. Worm. Mon. p. 19.

Digitized by Google

Chronicle, from which more recent historians have taken their descriptions. The figure of Crodus was that of an old man clothed in a white tunic, with a linen girdle, with floating ends. His head was uncovered; his right hand held a vessel, full of roses and other flowers, swimming in water; his left hand supported the wheel of a car; his naked feet stood on a rough scaly fish like a perch.[17] It was raised on a pedestal. It was found on the Mount Hercinius, in the fortress of Harsbourg, which was anciently called Satur-bourg[18], or the fortified hill of Satur. Hence this was probably the idol of Satur, from whom our Saturday is named.[19]

That the Saxons had the dismal custom of human sacrifices on some occasions cannot be doubted. Tacitus mentions it as a feature of all the Germans, that on certain days they offered human victims to their chief deity. Sidonius attests, that on their return from a depredation the Saxons immolated one tenth of their captives, selected by lot.[20] We have already mentioned, that for sacrilege the offender was sacrificed to the god whose temple he had violated; and Ennodius states of the Saxons, Heruli, and Francs, that they were believed to appease their deities with human blood.[21] But whether human sacrifices were an established part of their superstitious ritual, or whether they were but an occasional immolation of captives or criminals, cannot be decided. Nor is the distinction material.[22]

[17] Albinus Nov. Sax. Hist. p. 70., and Fabricius, p. 61.

[18] Montfaucon Ant. Exp. c. 10. He says, that at the entrance of this fortress the place was, in his time, shown where this image stood.

[19] The description of Prono, of the three-headed Trigla, of Porevith with five heads, and Svanto with four, of Radegast with a bull's head in his breast, and an eagle on his head, mentioned by Montfaucon from Grosser's History of Lusatia, seem to be more Oriental than Teutonic, and may have come into Germany from the latter Sarmatian tribes.

[20] Tac. de Moribus Germ. Sid. Apoll. ep. vi. lib. 8. Herodotus says of the Scythians, the presumed ancestors of the Saxons, that they sacrificed to Mars every hundredth man of their prisoners. Melp.

[21] Ennodius in Mag. Bib. Pol. 15. p. 306.

[22] Of the human sacrifices of the Northmen we have more express testimony. Dithmar apud Steph. 92. says, that in Seland, in January, they slew ninety-nine men, and as many horses, dogs, and cocks, to appease their

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Of the rites of the Anglo-Saxons we cannot learn many particulars. In the month of February they offered cakes to their deities, which occasioned the month to be called Sol monath. September, from its religious ceremonies, was denominated Halig monath, the holy month. November was marked, as the month of sacrifices, Blot monath, because at this period they devoted to their gods the cattle that they slew.[23] As it was their custom to use during the winter salted or dried meat, perhaps November, or Blot monath, was the period when the winter provision was prepared and consecrated.

Their celebrated festival of Leol, Jule, or Yule, which occurred at the period of our Christmas, was a combination of religion and conviviality. December was called ærra Leola, or before the Leol. January was æfterra Leola, or after it. As one of the Saxon names for Christmas day was Leola, or Leohol dæg, it is likely that this was the time when the festival commenced. This day was the first of their year; and as Bede derives it from the turning of the sun, and the days beginning then to lengthen[24]; as it was also called mother night, and as their sun was worshipped as a female, I suspect that this was a festival dedicated to the sun.

But the Saxon idol, whose celebrity on the Continent was the most eminent, was the Irminsula.[25]

deities. Snorre mentions a king of Sweden who immolated nine of his sons to Odin, to obtain an extension of life, i. p. 34. He also states that the Swedes sacrificed one of their sovereigns to Odin, to obtain plenty, ib. p. 56. When the famine began, oxen were offered up; in the following autumn, they proceeded to human victims, and at last destroyed their king. Dudo Quint. says, they slew cattle and men in honour of Thor. For other instances of human sacrifices in the North, see Herv. Saga, 97.; Ara Frode, 63. 145.; Kristni Saga, 98.

[23] Bede, de Temporum Ratione, p. 81. See a good description of a Danish sacrifice in Snorre, Saga Hak. God. c. 16.

[24] Bede, de Temporum Ratione. I see that ġýl ġunne once occurs in a hymn, "Let the sun shine." See Diet. voc. Gyl. They who desire to see the opinions which have been given of the derivation of the Leol will be assisted by Hickes, Dissert. Ep. p. 212, &c.

[25] The most complete account of this idol is in the Irminsula Saxonica, by Henry Meibomius. It is in the third volume of the Rerum German. Hist. published by the two Meibomii.

Digitized by Google

The name of this venerated idol has been spelt with varying orthography. The Saxon Chronicle, published at Mentz in 1492, calls it Armensula, which accords with the pronunciation of modern Saxony. The appellation adhered to by Meibomius, the most elaborate investigator of this curious object of Saxon idolatry, is Irminsula.[26]

It stood at Eresberg, on the Dimele.[27] This place the Saxon Chronicle above mentioned calls Marsburg. The Rhyming Chronicle of the thirteenth century writes it Mersberg, which is the modern name.[28]

Its temple was spacious, elaborate, and magnificent. The image was raised upon a marble column.[29]

The predominant figure was an armed warrior. Its right hand held a banner, in which a red rose was conspicuous; its left presented a balance. The crest of its helmet was a cock; on its breast was engraven a bear, and the shield depending from its shoulders exhibited a lion in a field full of flowers.[30] The expressions of Adam of Bremen seem to intimate that it was of wood, and that the place where it stood had no roof. It was the largest idol of all Saxony, and according to Rolwinck, a writer of the fifteenth century, whose authorities are not known to us, though the warlike image was the principal figure, three others were about it.[31] From the chronicle called the Vernacular Chronicle, we learn that the other Saxon temples had pictures of the Irminsula.[32]

Priests of both sexes attended the temple. The women applied themselves to divination and fortune-telling; the men sacrificed, and often intermeddled with political affairs, as their sanction was thought to insure success.

The priests of the Irminsula at Eresberg appointed the gow graven, the governors of the districts of continental Saxony. They also named the judges, who annually de-

[26] Meibom. p. 6. It has been called Irminsulus, Irminsul, Irmindsul, Erminsul, Hermansaul, Hormensul, Hermesuel, Hermensul, and Adurmensul, ibid.

[27] Ibid. c. ii. p. 6. [28] Ibid. p. 7. [29] Ibid. c. iii. p. 8.

[30] Ibid. p. 9. The particular descriptions of this idol are all taken from the Saxon Chronicle printed at Mentz.

[31] Meibom. c. iii. p. 9. [32] Ibid.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

cided the provincial disputes. There were sixteen of these judges: the eldest, and therefore the chief, was called Gravius; the youngest, Frono, or attendant; the rest were Freyerichter, or free judges. They had jurisdiction over seventy-two families. Twice a year, in April and October, the Gravius and the Frono went to Eresberg, and there made a placatory offering of two wax lights and nine pieces of money. If any of the judges died in the year, the event was notified to the priests, who, out of the seventy-two families, chose a substitute. In the open air, before the door of the person appointed, his election was seven times announced to the people in a loud voice, and this was his inauguration.

In the hour of battle, the priests took their favourite image from its column, and carried it to the field. After the conflict, captives and the cowardly of their own army, were immolated to the idol.[33] Meibomius states two stanzas of an ancient song, in which the son of a Saxon king, who had lost a battle, complains that he was delivered to the priest to be sacrificed.[34] He adds, that, according to some writers, the ancient Saxons, and chiefly their military, on certain solemn days, clothed in armour, and brandishing iron cestus, rode round the idol, and, sometimes dismounting to kneel before it, bowed down and murmured out their prayers for help and victory.[35]

To whom this great image was erected, is a question

[33] Meib. c. iii. p. 10. Tacitus mentions generally of the Germans, that they detached their idols and banners from their sacred groves, and carried them to the field of battle. Germ. s. 7.

[34] The verses are,—

Sol ich nun in Gottes fronen hende
In meinen aller besten tagen
Geben werden, und sterben so elende
Das musz ich wol hochlich klagen.
Wen mir das glucke fuget hette
Des streites einen guten ende,
Dorffte ich nicht leisten diese wette
Netzen mit blut die hire wende.

Meibom. p. 10.

[35] Meibom. p. 11.

Digitized by Google

full of uncertainty. Because Ερμης approached the sound of Irminsul, and Αρης that of Eresbergh, it has been referred to Mars and Mercury.[36] Some considered it a memorial of the celebrated Arminius[37]; and one has laboured to prove that it was an hieroglyphical effigy, intended for no deity in particular.[38]

In 772, this venerated object of Saxon superstition was thrown down and broken, and its fane destroyed, by Charlemagne. For three days the work of demolition was carried on by one part of the army, while the other remained under arms. Its immense wealth and precious vessels were distributed to the conquerors, or devoted to pious uses.[39]

The fate of the column of the image after its eversion may be noticed.[40] It was thrown into a waggon, and buried on the Weser, in a place where Corbey afterwards stood. It was found again in the reign after Charlemagne, and was transported beyond the Weser. The Saxons attempting to rescue it, a battle ensued on the spot, which was afterwards called Armensula, from the incident. The Saxons were repulsed, and, to prevent further chances,

[36] Ibid. c. v. p. 11.

[37] The names to this supposition are very respectable.

[38] Joannes Goropius Beccanius is the person whose reveries are given at length in Meibomius, 13—17. We may suggest as a new opinion, that Hermansul literally expresses "The Pillar of the Lord the Moon, or of the Lord Man," whom the Germans, according to Tacitus, revered. As the moon was a male deity, Mannus and the moon may have been the same person. From the inscription mentioned below, it was clearly their war god. The similarity between Irmin and Ερμης may have led Tacitus to mention that the Germans chiefly worshipped Mercury, s. 9.

[39] Meibom. p. 18. The image is said to have been long preserved in the monastery at Corbey. It then bore this inscription: "Formerly I was the leader and god of the Saxons. The people of war adored me. The nation who worshipped me governed the field of battle." Ibid.

[40] It was about eleven feet long, and the circumference of the base was about twelve cubits. The base was of rude stone, or of gravel stone. The column was marble, of a light red colour. Its belts were of orichalchus; the upper and lower gilt, and also the one between these and the crown, which is also gilt, as is the upper circle incumbent on it, which has three heroic verses. The whole work was surrounded with iron rails, dentated to preserve it from injury. Meibom. p. 31. He has given a plate of it.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

the column was hastily thrown into the Inner. A church being afterwards built in the vicinity, at Hillesheim, it was conveyed into it after much religious lustration, and placed in the choir, where it long served to hold their lights at their festivals.[41] For many ages it remained neglected and forgotten, till at length Meibomius saw it, and a canon of the church, friendly to his studies, had its rust and discoloration taken off.[42]

IDOLATROUS nations are eminently superstitious. The proneness of mankind to search into futurity attempts its gratification, in the æras of ignorance, by the fallacious use of auguries, lots, and omens.

ALL the German nations were addicted to these absurdities; and the account which Tacitus relates of them generally is applied by Meginhard to the ancient Saxons. They were infatuated to believe that the voices and flights of birds were interpreters of the Divine will. Horses were supposed to neigh from celestial inspiration, and they decided their public deliberations by the wisdom of lots. They cut a small branch of a fruit-tree into twigs, marked them, and scattered them at random on a white vest. The priest, if it were a public council, or the father, at a private consultation, prayed, gazed at heaven, drew each three times, and interpreted according to the mark previously impressed. If the omen were adverse, the council was deferred.[43]

To explore the fate of an impending battle, they selected a captive of the nation opposing, and appointed a chosen Saxon to fight with him. They judged of their future victory or defeat by the issue of this duel.[44]

41 Meibom. p. 19. and p. 31.

42 Ibid. p. 19. Our ancient Irmin-street has been lately conjectured to have been derived from the name of this idol. If so, the inference would be reasonable that it was worshipped also in England.

43 Tacit. de morib. Germ. and Meginhard, p. 39.; and see Bede, p. 144. 147. In the law of the Frisians there is a curious order of determining by lot, with twigs, who was guilty of a homicide, when it occurred in a popular tumult. See it in Lindenb. i. p. 496. Alfred, in his version of Beda, says, they hluton mid tanum, they cast lots with twigs, p. 624.

44 Meginhard, p. 39.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

THE notion which, from Chaldea, pervaded both East and West, that the celestial luminaries influenced the fortunes of mankind, operated powerfully on the Saxon mind. Affairs were thought to be undertaken with better chance on peculiar days, and the full or new moon was the indication of the auspicious season.[45]

MAGIC, the favourite delusion of ignorant man, the invention of his pride or malignity, or the resort of his imbecility, prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons. Even one of their kings chose to meet the Christian missionaries in the open air, because he fancied that magical arts had peculiar power within a house.[46]

OF the speculative principles of the Anglo-Saxon Paganism we have no written evidence. But of the religion of the Northmen, which prevailed in or near the parts which the Angles and Saxons inhabited about the Elbe, and was the religion of the Northmen colonies of England, we have sufficient documents remaining. In these we probably contemplate the substance of the faith of our rude forefathers. In some respects the polytheism of the North was one of the most rational forms of its erroneous theory; and, though inferior in taste and imagination, displays on the whole a vigour and an improvement of mind beyond the classical mythology. The Edda, though wilder, has better theology than much of Ovid's Metamorphoses.

IT is remarkable, that the Northmen venerated three principal supreme deities connected with each other by relationship. Odin, whom they called All-father, or the Universal Parent; Freya, his wife; and their son Thor. Idols of these three were placed in their celebrated temple at Upsal.[47] Of these the Danes, like the Anglo-Saxons, paid the highest honours to Odin; the Norwegians and Icelanders to Thor; and the Swedes to Freya.[48]

IN the system of the Northmen's religion, we see the

[45] Meginhard, p. 39. [46] Bede, i. c. 25. p. 61. [47] Ad. Brem.

[48] Mallet. Nort. Antiq. vol. i. p. 97. So in the Edda Gangler is represented as beholding three thrones, each above the other. The lowest was called the lofty one; the second is equal; the highest was named "the third." Suppl. Nor. Ant. vol. ii. p. 282.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

great principles of the ancient theism, mingled with the additions of allegory, polytheism, and idolatry. Odin's first name is the All-father, though many others were subjoined to this in the process of time. He is described in the Edda as the First of the Gods: "He lives for ever: he governs all his kingdom, both the small parts and the great: he made heaven, and the earth, and the air: he made man, and gave him a spirit which shall live even after the body shall have vanished. Then the just and the well-deserving shall dwell with him in a place called Gimle; but bad men shall go to Hela."[49] In other parts it adds,—"When the All-father sits on his supreme throne, he surveys with his eyes all the world and the manners of all men."[50] — "Odin is the first and the most ancient: he governs all things; and though the rest of the gods are powerful, yet they serve him as children their father. He is called All-father, because he is the father of all the gods."[51] Thor is represented as the son of Odin and Freya, and the Earth is called Odin's daughter.[52]

They had some remarkable traditions preserved in their ancient Voluspa. One, that the earth and heavens were preceded by a state of nonentity.[53] Another, that at a destined period the earth and all the universe would be destroyed by fire. This catastrophe was connected with a being, that was to direct it, whom they called Surtur, or the black one.[54] Till this day, Loke, their principle of evil,

[49] Edda, Hist. Prim. p. 283. See the twelve names given to Odin, p. 285. and forty-six in p. 305.

[50] Edda, Hist. Sext. p. 292. [51] Edda, Hist. Duod. p. 305.

[52] Edda, p. 292.

[53] The words of the Voluspa are, — "At the beginning of time there was nothing: neither land, nor sea, nor foundations below. The earth was nowhere to be found: nor the heaven above. There was an infinite abyss, and grass nowhere." Edda, Hist. Prim. p. 284.

[54] The Edda thus describes him: "First of all was Muspells-heim. It is lucid, glowing, and impervious to strangers. There Surtur rules, and sits in the extremity of the earth. He holds a flaming sword, and will come at the end of the world and conquer all the gods, and burn the unwise." Edda, p. 286. The most ancient and oracular Voluspa speaks of this period. See it annexed to the Appendix. Its latter part alludes to these incidents.

Digitized by Google

was to remain in the cave and in chains of iron to which he was consigned.[55] A new world is to emerge at this period; the good will be happy.[56] The gods will sit in judgment, and the wicked will be condemned to a dreary habitation.[57] The Edda ends with a description of this final period, which presents it to us in a more detailed shape: —

"Snow will rush from all the quarters of the world. Three winters without a summer will be followed by three others, and then wars will pervade the whole world. Brother, father, son, will perish by each other's hands. The wolf will devour the sun; another, the moon. The stars will fall from heaven. The earth trembles. Mountains and trees are torn up. The sea rushes over the earth. Midgard the great serpent hastens over it. The ship made of the nails of dead men floats. The giant Hrymer is its pilot. The wolf Fenris opens his enormous mouth; the lower jaw touching the earth, the upper, the heavens. The serpent breathes poison over heaven, and the sons of Muspell ride forward: Surtur leads them. Before him, behind him, a glowing fire spreads. His sword radiates like the sun. From their course the bridge of heaven is broken. They move towards a plain, and Fenris and Midgard follow. There Loke and Hrymer meet them with all the infernal genii. The hosts of the sons of Muspell glitter round. Heimdal sounds vehemently his tremendous trumpet to awaken the gods. Odin consults. The ash Ygdrasil trembles. Every thing in heaven and earth is in fear. The gods and heroes arm. Odin, with his golden helmet, moves against Fenris. Thor assails Midgard. Frey falls beaten down by Surtur. The dog Garmer attacks Tyr, and both perish. Thor kills the serpent, but dies also. And the wolf devours Odin. Vidar seizes the monster's jaws, and at last rends them asunder. Loke and Heimdal slay each other. Surtur then darts his flames over all the earth, and the whole universe is consumed."[58]

THESE traditions correspond with the idea mentioned in the beginning of this work, that the barbaric nations of Europe have sprung from the branches of more civilised states.

ALLEGORY, disturbed imagination, mysticism, and perverted reasoning, have added to these traditions many wild

[55] Edda, p. 347. [56] See the Voluspa in the last stanza.

[57] The same events are mentioned in the Vafthrudnismal, Edd. Sem. p. 28 — 33.

[58] Edda, last chapter, p. 347 — 350. It then proceeds to describe the new world.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

and absurd tales, whose meaning we cannot penetrate. The formation of Nifl-heim, or hell, from whose rivers came frozen vapours; and Muspeil-heim, or the world of fire, from which lightning and flames issued. The gelid vapours melting from the heat into drops: one of these becoming the giant Ymer[59], and another, the cow Ædumla, to nourish him, who, by licking off the rocks their salt and hoar frost, became a beautiful being, from whose son Bore, their Odin, and the gods proceeded[60]; while from the feet of the wicked Ymer sprang the Giants of the Frost. The sons of Bore slaying Ymer, and so much blood issuing from his wounds as to drown all the families of the Giants of the Frost, excepting one who was preserved in his bark.[61] The re-creation of the earth from the flesh of Ymer; his perspiration becoming the seas; his bones the mountains; his hair the vegetable races; his brains the clouds; and his head the heavens.[62] All these display that mixture of reasoning to account for the origin of things; of violent allegory to express its deductions; of confused tradition, and distorting fancy, which the mythologies of most nations exhibit.

We have already remarked, that the general term used by the Anglo-Saxons to express the Deity in the abstract was God, which also implied the Good. This identity of phrase carries the imagination to those primeval times, when the Divine Being was best known to his creatures by his gracious attributes, was the object of their love, and was adored for his beneficence. But when they departed from the pure belief of the first æras, and bent their religion to suit their habits, new reasonings, and their wishes, then systems arose, attempting to account for the production of things, without his preceding eternity or even agency, and to describe his own origination and destruction. Hence the Northmen cosmogonists taught the rising of the world of frost from the north, and of the world of fire from the south; a formation by their united agency of a race of evil

[59] Edda, Hist. Tert. p. 288. [60] Edda, Hist. Quart. 289.
[61] Edda, Hist. Quin. p. 290. He was called Bergelmer.
[62] The ancient verse, quoted in Edda, p. 291.

Digitized by Google

beings through Ymer, and of deities through the cow Ædumla; a warfare between the divine and the wicked race; the death of Ymer; the fabrication of the earth and heaven out of his body; and the final coming of the powers of the world of fire to destroy all things, and even the deities themselves. The mixture of materialism, atheism, and superstition visible in these notions, shows the divergency of the human mind from its first great truths, and its struggles to substitute its own phantoms and perverted reasonings instead. All polytheism and mythology seem to be an attempted compromise between scepticism and superstition: the natural process of the mind beginning to know, resolved to question, unattending to its ignorance, and solving its doubts by its fancies, or concealing them by its allegories; and shaping its faith to suit its inclinations. CHAP. III.

The most formidable feature of the ancient religion of the Anglo-Saxons, as of all the Teutonic nations, was its separation from the pure and benevolent virtues of life, and its indissoluble union with war and violence. It condemned the faithless and the perjured; but it represented their Supreme Deity as the father of combats and slaughter, and made those his favourite children who fell in the field of battle. To them he assigned the heavenly Valhall and Vingolfa, and promised to salute them after their death as his heroes.[63] This tenet sanctified all the horrors of war, and connected all the hopes, energies, and passions of humanity with its continual prosecution.

As the nation advanced in its active intellect, it began to be dissatisfied with its mythology. Many indications exist of this spreading alienation[64], which prepared the Northern

[63] Edda, Hist. Duod. p. 304.

[64] Bartholin has collected some instances which are worth the attention of those who study the history of human nature. One warrior says, that he trusted more to his strength and his arms than to Thor and Odin. Another exclaims: "I believe not in images and dæmons. I have travelled over many places, and have met giants and monsters, but they never conquered me. Therefore I have hitherto trusted to my own strength and courage." To a Christian who interrogated him, one of these fighters boasted, that he knew no religion, but relied on his own powers. For the same reason a father and his sons refused to sacrifice to the idols. When the king of Nor-

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

mind for the reception of the nobler truths of Christianity, though at first averse from them.

way asked Gaukathor of what religion he was, he answered, "I am neither Christian nor heathen; neither I nor my companions have any other religion than to trust to ourselves and our good fortune, which seem to be quite sufficient for us." Many others are recorded to have given similar answers; despising their idols, yet not favouring Christianity. Another is mentioned as taking rather a middle path: — "I do not wish to revile the gods; but Freya seems to me to be of no importance. Neither she nor Odin are any thing to us." See Bartholin de Caus. p. 79—81.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

On the Menology and Literature of the PAGAN SAXONS.

CHAP. IV

IN their computation of time our ancestors reckoned by nights instead of days, and by winters instead of years. Their months were governed by the revolution of the moon. They began their year from the day which we celebrate as Christmas-day[1], and that night they called Moedrenech, or mother night, from the worship or ceremonies, as Bede imagines, in which, unsleeping, they spent it. In the common years, they appropriated three lunar months to each of the four seasons. When their year of thirteen months occurred, they added the superfluous month to their summer season, and by that circumstance had then three months of the name of Liba, which occasioned these years of thirteen months to be called Tri-Libi. The names of their months were these: —

Liuli, or æfterra Geola, answering to our	January.
Sol monath	February.
Rehd monath	March.
Eoftur monath	April.
Tri-milchi	May.
Liba	June.
Liba	July.
Weinb, or Wenban monath	August.
Dalig monath	September.
Windyn fylleth	October.
Bloth monath	November.
Liuli, or æfterra Geola (before Geol)	December.

THEY divided the year into two principal parts, summer and winter. The six months of the longer days were applied to the summer portion, the remainder to winter.

[1] The Francs began the year in the autumnal season; for Alcuin writes to Charlemagne: — "I wonder why your youths begin the legitimate year from the month of September." Oper. p. 1496.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Their winter season began at their month ꝑynᵹyn ꝑylleth, or October. The full moon in this month was the æra or the commencement of this season, and the words ꝑynᵹyc ꝑylleth were meant to express the winter full moon.

The reason of the names of their months of Sol monath, Rehb monath, Eoꝛtuꝛ monath, Halig monath, and Bloth monath, we have already explained. Bede thus accounts for the others:

Tꝛu-milchi expressed that their cattle were then milked three times a day. Liba, signifies mild or navigable, because in these months the serenity of the air is peculiarly favourable to navigation. Wenben monath implies that the month was usually tempestuous. The months of Leola were so called because of the turning of the sun on this day, and the diminution of the length of the night.[2] One of the months preceded this change, the other followed it.

It has been much doubted whether the Anglo-Saxons had the use of Letters when they possessed themselves of England. It is certain that no specimen of any Saxon writing, anterior to their conversion to Christianity, can be produced. It cannot therefore be proved that they had letters by any direct evidence, and yet some reasons may be stated which make it not altogether safe to assert too positively, that our ancestors were ignorant of the art of writing in their pagan state.

1st. Alphabetical characters were used by the Northern nations on the Baltic before they received Christianity[3], and the origin of these is ascribed to Odin, who heads the genealogies of the ancient Saxon chieftains as well as those of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; and who is stated to

[2] This valuable account of the Saxon year is in Bede, de Temporum Ratione, in the second volume of his works, in the edition of Cologne, p. 81. Other Saxon menologies may be seen in Wanley, 185. and 109.; and a comparative one of the Anglo-Saxons, Francs, Icelanders, Danes, and Swedes, is in Hickes's Gram. Anglo-Sax. p. 214.

[3] I would not attribute to the Runic letters an extravagant antiquity, but the inscriptions on rocks, &c. copied by Wormius in his Literaturæ Runiçæ, and by Stephanius, in his notes on Saxo, proved that the Northerns used them before they received Christianity.

Digitized by Google

have settled in Saxony before he advanced to the North.[4] Either the pagan Saxons were acquainted with the Runic characters, or they were introduced in the North after the fifth century, when the Saxons came to Britain, and before the middle of the sixth, when they are mentioned by Fortunatus, which is contrary to the history and traditions of the Scandinavian nations, and to probability. We may remark, that Run is used in Anglo-Saxon[5], as Runar in the Icelandic, to express letters or characters.[6] It is true that Odin used the runæ for the purpose of magic, and that in Saxon run-cræftig, or skilled in runæ, signifies a magician[7]; but the magical application of characters is no argument against their alphabetical nature, because many of the foolish charms which our ancestors and other nations have respected, have consisted, not merely of alphabetical characters, but even of words.[8]

2d. The passage of Venantius Fortunatus, written in the middle of the sixth century, attests that the Runic was used for the purpose of writing in his time. He says,

> The barbarous Runæ is painted on ashen tablets,
> And what the papyrus says a smooth rod effects.[9]

Now as the Anglo-Saxons were not inferior in civilisation to any of the barbarous nations of the North, it cannot be

[4] Snorre, Ynglinga Saga.

[5] So Cedmon uses the word, run bith genecenob, p. 73.; hræt reo run bude, p. 86.; that he to him the letters should read and explain, hræt reo run bude, p. 90.; he had before said, in his account of Daniel and Belshazzar, that the angel of the Lord rnar tha in rage ropba genynu barpe bocrtarar, p. 90.

[6] Schilter's Thesaurus, vol. iii. p. 693.

[7] Thus Cedmon says, the run-cræftige men could not read the handwriting till Daniel came, p. 90.

[8] One passage in a Saxon MS. confirms this idea: "Then asked the ealdorman the hertheng, whether through bryderert, or through rynrtarer, he had broken his bonds; and he answered that he knew nothing of this craft." Vesp. D. 14. p. 132. Now rynrtarer means literally ryn letters. We may remark, that the Welsh word for alphabet is coel bren, which literally means the tree or wood of Omen; and see the Saxon description of the northern Runæ, in Hickes's Gram. Ang. Sax. p. 135.

[9] Ven. Fortun. lib. vi. p. 1814. Ed. Mag. Bib. tom. viii.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

easily supposed that they were ignorant of Runic characters [10], if their neighbours used them.

3d. THOUGH it cannot be doubted that the letters of our Saxon MSS. written after their conversion are of Roman origin, except only two, the th and the w, Þ, þ, the thorn and the wen, yet these two characters are allowed by the best critics to be of Runic[11] parentage; and if this be true, it would show that the Anglo-Saxons were acquainted with Runic as well as with Roman characters when they commenced the handwriting that prevails in their MSS.

4th. IF the Saxons had derived the use of letters from the Roman ecclesiastics, it is probable that they would have taken from the Latin language the words they used to express them. Other nations so indebted, have done this. To instance from the Erse language: —

For book, they have	leabhar,	from liber.
letter,	liter [12],	litera.
to write,	scriobham,	scribere.
	grafam,	γραφω.
writing,	sgriobhadh,	scriptura.
to read,	leagham, leabham,	legere.

But nations who had known letters before they became acquainted with Roman literature would have indigenous terms to express them.

THE Saxons have such terms. The most common word by which the Anglo-Saxons denoted alphabetical letters was ꝼtæꝼ; plural, ꝼtæꝼa. Elfric, in his Saxon Grammar,

[10] There are various alphabets of the Runæ, but their differences are not very great. I consider those characters to be most interesting which have been taken from the ancient inscriptions remaining in the North. Wormius gives these, Lit. Run. p. 58. Hickes, in his Gram. Anglo-Isl. c. 1. gives several Runic alphabets.

[11] The Saxons used three characters for th, Ð, ð, and þ. Of these the two first seem to be Roman capitals, with a small hyphen. Astle, in his History of Writing, p. 7. and 8., gives these d's. The other, þ, is the Runic d. See Wormius, p. 58. The Runic d, in some dialects, was pronounced th: so dus, a giant, or spectre of the woods, as given by Wormius, p. 94., is by other writers written thus. I consider the þ to be taken from the þ.

[12] In the Erse Testament, Greek letters are expressed by litrichibh Greigis. Luke, xxiii. 38.

Digitized by Google

so uses it.[13] The copy of the Saxon coronation oath begins with, "This writing is written, ꝼꞇæꝼ be ꝼꞇæꝼe (letter by letter) from that writing which Dunstan, archbishop, gave to our lord at Kingston."[14] In the same sense the word is used in Alfred's translation of Bede[15], and in the Saxon Gospels.[16] It is curious to find the same word so applied in the Runic mythology. In the Vafthrudis-mal, one of the odes of the ancient Edda of Semund, it occurs in the speech of Odin, who says "fornum stavfom" in the ancient letters.[17]

The numerous compound words derived from ꝼꞇæꝼ, a letter, show it to have been a radical term in the language, and of general application.

Stæf-cræft,	the art of letters.
Stæfen-rop,	the alphabet.
Stæf-ȝefeȝ,	a syllable.
Stæflic,	learned.
Stæfnian,	to teach letters.
Stæf-plega,	a game at letters.
Stæf-pir,	wise in letters.
Stæfer-heafod,	the head of the letters.
Stæfa-nama,	the names of the letters.

The same word was also used like the Latin litera, to signify an epistle.[18]

The art of using letters, or writing, is also expressed in Saxon by a verb not of Roman origin. The Saxon term for the verb to write, is not, like the Erse expression, from the Latin scribere, but is "awritan," or "ȝewritan." This

[13] Cotton. Lib. Julius, A. 2. [14] Cotton. Lib. Cleop. B. 13.

[15] Bede, 615. 683. [16] John, vii. 15. Luke, xxiii. 38.

[17] Edda Semund, p. 3. In the Icelandic Gospels, for Latin and Hebrew letters we have Latiniskum and Ebreskum bokstefum. Luke, xxiii. 38. The Franco-theotisc, for letters, has a similar compound word, bok-staven.

[18] When a letter or authoritative document is mentioned in Saxon, the expressions applied to it are not borrowed from the Latin, as scriptum, mandatum, epistola, and such like; but it is said, "Honorius sent the Scot a ȝewrit," Sax. Ch. 39.; desired the Pope with his ȝe-writ to confirm it, ib. 38. So Alfred, translating Bede, says, "The Pope sent to Augustin pallium and ȝe-writ," i. c. 29.; here borrowing from the Latin the pallium, a thing known to them from the Romans, but using a native Saxon term to express the word epistle.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

verb is formed from a similar noun of the same meaning as ƿræf. The noun is preserved in the Mæso-Gothic, where writs signifies "a letter."

In like manner the Saxons did not derive their word for book from the Latin liber; they expressed it by their own term, "boc," as the Northerns called it "bog."

I do not mean to assert indiscriminately, that whenever a word indigenous in a language is used to express writing, it is therefore to be inferred that the people using that language have also letters; because it may so happen that the word may not have been an indigenous term for letters, but for something else; and may have been applied to express letters only analogically or metaphorically. To give an instance: the Indians of New England expressed letters, or writing, by the terms wussukwhonk, or wussukwheg.[19] But the Indians had no letters nor writing among them; whence then had they these words? The answer is, that they were in the habit of painting their faces and their garments, and when we made them acquainted with writing, they applied to it their word for painting.[20] But though they could figuratively apply their term for painting to express writing, they had nothing to signify a book, and therefore it was necessary to ingraft our English word "book" into their language for that purpose.[21]

On the whole, I am induced to believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not unacquainted with alphabetical characters when they came into England. However this may be, it

19 Thus in the Indian Bible, "and this writing was written," Dan. v. 24. is rendered, kah yeh wassukwheg unussukkuh whosu; "and this is the writing that was written," kah yeh wussukwhonk ne adt tannus-sukuh whosik, ib. v. 25. "Darius signed the writing," Darius sealham wussuk whosuonk, vi. 9. "And the writing was," wussuk whonk no, John, xix. 19.

20 Thus wussukhosu was a painted coat. William's Key to the Language of America, p. 184. ed. 1643, and see his remark, p. 61. The Malays, who have borrowed their letters from other nations, have used the same analogy. Their word "to write" is toolis, which also signifies to paint. See Howison's Malay Dictionary.

21 Hence the translator was obliged to express, "this is the book of the generation" by uppometuongane book, Matt. i. 1. So, "I have found the book of the law," nunnamteoh naumatue book, 2 Kings, xxii. 8. "Hilkiah gave the book," Hilkiah aninnumauau book, ibid. v 9.

Digitized by Google

is certain that if they had ancient letters, they ceased to use them after their conversion, with the exception of their ƿ and ƿ. It was the invariable policy of the Roman ecclesiastics to discourage the use of the Runic characters, because they were of pagan origin, and had been much connected with idolatrous superstitions.[22] Hence, as soon as the Christian clergy acquired influence in the Saxon octarchy, all that appeared in their literature was in the character which they had formed from the Romans.

We know nothing of the compositions of the Anglo-Saxons in their pagan state. Tacitus mentions generally of the Germans, that they had ancient songs[23], and therefore we may believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not without them. Indeed, Dunstan is said to have learned the vain songs of his countrymen in their pagan state; and we may suppose, that if such compositions had not been in existence at that period, Edgar would not have forbidden men, on festivals, to sing Heathen songs.[24] But none of these have survived to us. If they were ever committed to writing, it was on wood, or stones; indeed their word for book (boc) expresses a beech-tree, and seems to allude to the matter of which their earliest books were made.[25] The poets of barbarous ages usually confide the little effusions of their genius to the care of tradition, They are seldom preserved in writing till literature becomes a serious study; and therefore we may easily believe, that if the Anglo-Saxons had alphabetical characters, they were much more

[22] The Swedes were persuaded by the Pope, in 1001, to lay aside the Runic letters, and to adopt the Roman in their stead. They were gradually abolished in Denmark, and afterwards in Iceland.

[23] De Moribus German. [24] Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 83.

[25] Wormius infers, that pieces of wood cut from the beech-tree were the ancient northern books, Lit. Run. p. 6. Saxo Grammaticus mentions, that Fengo's ambassadors took with them literas ligno insculptas, "because," adds Saxo, "that was formerly a celebrated kind of material to write upon," lib. iii. p. 52. Besides the passage formerly cited from Fortunatus, we may notice another, in which he speaks of the bark as used to contain characters. See Worm. p. 9, who says, that no wood more abounds in Denmark than the beech, nor is any more adapted to receive impressions, ib. p. 7. In Welsh, gwydd, a tree, or wood, is used to denote a book. Thus Gwilym Tew talks of reading the gwydd. Owen's Dict. voc. Gwydd.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

used for divinations, charms, and funeral inscriptions, than for literary compositions.

The Voluspa.

This Poem is frequently quoted in the Eada of Snorre, as a competent authority, and is therefore much more ancient. It is thought to have been compiled from preceding traditions by Sæmund, who lived about a hundred years before Snorre. As it has never appeared in English before, and is very little known in Europe, and is the most ancient record of the traditions of the Northmen which has yet been found, a translation of it will be added here. It is obscure and difficult, and the meaning is not always indisputable. I have made the version as literally as possible, and as well as I can understand it, but in some parts all the interpretations of it differ. Bartholin has sometimes rather paraphrased than translated his extracts. Its best commentary is Snorre's Edda. The name Voluspa implies the oracle or prophecy of Vola. This Sibyl of the North expresses in it, though with rapid conciseness, the great outlines of the most ancient Northern Mythology. The Voluspa and the Edda are two great repositories of the oldest and most venerated traditions of Pagan Scandinavia. The Voluspa opens abruptly, and most probably represents many of the ancient Saxon traditions or imaginations.

Be silent, I pray, all holy creatures!
Greater or small! sons of Heimdallar!
I will tell of the devices of Valfodur;
The ancient discourses of men: the earliest I know.

I know the giants; the early born;
They who formerly instructed me.
I know there are nine worlds, and nine supports.
And the great centre under the earth.

Digitized by Google

In the era of the ages where Ymer was dwelling,
There was no sand nor sea,
Nor winds on a vast ocean.
Earth yet was not; nor the heaven above.
Only the abyss of chaos; and no grass.

Before Bur had raised up the meadows,
And had enlarged Midgard,
The sun shone round the south,
And the ground produced its green fruits.

The sun from his noon, threw out the moon
With his right hand, over the steeds of heaven.
The sun knew not where should be his palaces:
The moon knew not where should be her home:
The stars knew not where would be their station.

Then all the Deities moved to their royal stools:
The stupendously-holy Gods considered these things:
They gave names to the night and to the twilight,
They called the morning and mid-day so;
And bade the rise and the course of the year to begin.

The Asæ met on the fields of Ida,
And framed their images and temples.
They placed the furnaces. They created money.
They made tongs and iron tools.

They played at dice. They were merry.
No vicious desire of gold arose among them.
Till three of the Thursa Virgins come,
Two very powerful from Jotun-heim.

The Gods then went to their divine stools,
Inquiring of the Holy Deities, this,—
Who ought to be the Lord of the Duerga, (the dwarfs,)
Or to create them
From Bruner's blood, and the legs of Blavis?

There Motsogner obtained the pre-eminence
Of all the Duerga. Durin, the next.
They made many images of men,
Dwarfs on the earth, as Durin said.

Nor and Nidi; the northern; the southern;
The east; the west; the hidden Althiofi,
Bivor and Bavor; Bumbur; Nori,
An, and Anar; Ae; the mead of knowledge.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Veigur and Gandalfur; Vindalfur; Thraim;
Theckur; Thorinn; Thror; Litur and Vitur;
Nar and Nyradur. Now I have the dwarfs,
The violent and the placid, rightly enumerated.

Fili; Kili; Fundinn; Nali;
Heiti; Vili; Hanar; Svior;
Frar: Hornbore; Flogur; Lone;
Aurvangur, and Eikinskialldi.

It is time that the dwarfs
From the family of Dualin
Should be reckoned by the kindreds of the people,
For an auspicious year;
They go out from the rocks above ground,
To the seats of the husbandmen;
The sea of the ploughs.

There was Draupner and Dolgkrasir:
Har; Haugspere; Hlevangur; Gloe;
Skryver; Virvir; Skafidur; Ai;
Alfur; Ingve of Eikinskialldr;
Falur; Frosti; Fidur; Sinnar;
Dore; Ore; Dufar; Andvere;
Heph; Fili; Haar; Sviar;
This will be manifest while people live;
The number of their descendants will value it.

Until three came from this troop,
The powerful and rich Asæ, to their home,
They found in the land weak and unwarlike ones.
Ask and Embla, without a destiny.

These had then no soul; they had then no reason;
No blood; no senses; no good colour.
Odin gave them a soul. Hœnir gave reason;
Lodur gave them blood and a good complexion.

I know that an ash existed called Ygdrasil:
Its lofty size covered with white clay.
Then comes the rain that falls in the valleys;
It stands always green over Ordar-brunne.[26]

Then came the much-knowing virgins;
Three, from that sea

[26] These words mean "The Fountain of Necessity."

Digitized by Google

Which extends over the oak:
One is called Urd (necessity);
Another Verdande (the possible);
The third Skulld.[27]
They engrave on the shield;
They appoint laws, they chuse laws
For the sons of the ages;
The fates of mankind.

This one knew the first slaughter
Of the people in the world;
When they supported Gullvelg with weapons;
And burnt her in the hall of Har.

Three times they burnt her;
Three times re-born:
Often — again — yet she lived.
They called her Heid,
Whatever house they came to.

Vola of good omen
Dishonoured the divine mysteries.
She knew magic arts.
She could use enchantments,
Always troubling like an evil woman.

Then the Deities
Went each to their judicial stools.
Considering whether mischiefs from bad counsel
Would occur from the Asæ;
Or whether all the Gods
Should reserve their banquets to themselves.

Odin hastened,
And sent his darts into the crowd.
This was the first slaughter of men in the world.
The wall of the city of Asæ was broken.
Vaner made the fields to be trampled by war.

Then all the Gods
Went to their judicial stools:
The Holy Deities: to consider
Who would mingle the æther and the sea;
Or give the Virgin Odi
To the race of the Jotna (the giants).

[27] The Edda calls these "the Past, the Present, and the Future."

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Thor was one there; turgid with bile:
He rarely sat,
When he perceived such things.
Oath and compacts were cut thro',
And all the controversies which intervened.

She knew;
Heimdallur had the secret song;
Under the same sacred zone
She beheld the river
Flowing with its dark torrent.
From the compact of Valfodur.
Know you more? It is this.

She sat alone in the air,
When the old man came,
Yggiongur of the Asæ,
And looked her in the face.
"What do you seek from me?"
"Why do you tempt me?"
I know all. Odin!
Where have you hidden the eye?
In the greater fountain of Mimur.
Mimur every morning drinks mead
From the pledge of Valfodur.
Know you more? What is it?

Herfodur delivered to him
The rings and the bracelets.
The spell of riches; wisdom;
And the staffs of prophecy.
He saw these well and widely
Over all the earth.
Know you more? What is it?

He saw the Valkyriar
Immediately coming.
Adorned on steeds, they went to Gothiod.
Skulld held the shield:
Scogul was the other.
Ginnur; Helldur;
Gondull and Gierskialld.
Now the maidens of Odin are told:
The Valkyrear; instructed to ride over the ground.

Digitized by Google

I saw
The secret destinies on Balder.
The bleeding warrior; the son of Odin.
The slender and polished weapon
That killed him
Stood in the field growing upwards.

It was made from that tree
Which appeared to me
A mournful calamity
When Hodur darted it:
The killer of Balder, born before day.
Before one night the new born
Struck the son of Odin.

Then he would not raise his hands
Nor comb his head
Before he should carry
The foe of Balder to the pile.
Frigga grieved in her Fensola,
The keeper of Vahalla.
Know you more? Is it this?

She saw the bound one
Lying under the grove of the Huns.
The perfidious funeral.
One like Lok,
There sat as Sigynia.
Never dear to her husband.
Know you more? What is it?

A river flows from the east
Over poisoned vales,
Carrying mud and turf.
It is called Slidur.

There stands towards the north,
In Nidafiollum,
A golden palace named Sindra;
But another exists in Okolni.
The ale cellars of the Jotun
Which is called Brimir.

She saw a palace stand far from the sun
In Nastrondum.
It looks at the doors of the north.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

The building is twisted from the spines of serpents:
Poisoned torrents
Flow thro' its windows.

There she saw amid the dreadful streams
The perjured and the murderers:
And those who pull the ears
Of another's wife.
Their Nidhoggur
Tore the flesh from their corpses.
The fierce Wolf devoured the men.
Know you more? It is this.

There sat an old man
Towards the east in a wood of iron.
Where he nourished the sons of Fenris.
Every one of these grew up prodigious;
A giant form;
The persecutor of the moon.

He was saturated
With the lives of dying men.
He sprinkled the host of the Deities with blood.
He darken'd the light of the sun in the summer.
All the winds were malignant.
Know you more? It is this.

He sat on a mound, and struck the harp.
Gygas the herdsman.
The glad Egder (the eagle)
Sang before him on the boughs of the tree,
The purple cock surnamed Fialer.

The golden-haired bird
Sang with the Asæ.
He roused the heroes with Herfadur.
But another crowed below the earth,
The yellow cock in the palace of Hela.

Garmur barked horribly
Before the cave of Gnipa.
The chains will be broken:
Freco will rush out,
Wise, she knows many things.
But I see beyond,
From the twilight of the Deities,
The fierce Sigtiva.

Digitized by Google

Brethren will fight and slay each other;
Kindred will spurn their consanguinity:
Hard will be the world:
Many the adulteries.
A bearded age: an age of swords:
Shields will be cloven.
An age of winds; an age of wolves.
Till the world shall perish
There will not be one that will spare another.

The sons of Mimur will sport;
But the bosom of the earth will burn.
Hear the sound of the Mystic horn,
Heimdallur will blow on high
The elevated horn.
Odin will speak by the head of Mimer.

The ancient tree will sound ominously.
The Jotun will be dissolved.
The ash Yggdrasil erected
Will become terrible.
Garmur will bark
Before Gniper's cave.
The chains will be shattered:
And Freco will run forth.

Hrymer will drive his car from the east.
Jornumgandus will revolve round
With the rage of the Jotun (giants),
The serpent will move the seas;
But the eagle flies
Through the seas of the people:
And Lok will hold his club.

All the sons of Fiflo lead Freco.
The brother of Bilvifs accompanies them.

What is there among the Asæ?
What among the Elfi?
All the house of the Jotun trembles:
The Dvergi (the dwarfs) groan
Before the doors of the rocks:
Their stony asylum.
Know you more? What is it?

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Surtur comes from the south
With Swiga — lesi
The sword of Valtivi radiates like the sun:
The stony rocks glide away:
The Deities are enraged;
Men tread the way of Hela:
But the heaven is cleft in twain.

Then Hlinar, the other grief goes forth.
When Odin goes to battle with the Wolf.
The striker of Beli shining
Opposes Surtur.
Then the husband of Frigga falls.

Then will come Sigfodr
The greater son of Odin:
Vidar; to fight with the fatal animal.
Who with her broad hand,
In the middle of her jaws,
Pierces his heart with a sword.
Thus avenging the death of her father.

Then comes
The beautiful son Hlodynia.
The son of Odin combated the Wolf.
He slew in wrath the serpent Midgard.
Men state the prop of the world.

The offspring of Fiorgunar
Stepped nine steps.
Weakened by the black and hungry snake,
The sun darkens;
The earth is immerged in the sea;
The serene stars are withdrawn from heaven:
Fire rages in the ancient world:
The lofty colour reaches to heaven itself.

Garmur barks before the cave of Gnipa;
The chains are broken:
Freco rushes out.

She sees at last emerge from the ocean,
An earth in every part flourishing.
The cataracts flow down:
The eagle flies aloft;
And hunt the fishes in the mountains.

Digitized by Google

The Asæ met in Ida Valle,
And talked of the world's great calamities:
And of the ancient runæ of Fimbultyr.

These things done, the wonderful dice
Are found gilt in the grass,
Which those of the former days possessed.

There were fields without sowing;
All adverse things became prosperous.
Baldur will come again.
Haudur and Baldur:
Hroptr and Sigroptr;
The Asæ will dwell without evils.
Do you yet understand?

Then Heinar shares the power of chusing Vidar,
And the sons of the two brothers
Inhabit the vast mansion of the winds.
Do you know more?

A hall stands brighter than the sun;
Covered with gold in Gimlé.
There virtuous people will dwell:
And for ages will enjoy every good.

There will come the obscene dragon flying,
The serpent from Nidar-fiolli.
He carries the corpses in his wings:
He flies over the ground:
The infernal serpent, Nidhoggur:
Now the earth gapes for him.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

The Arrival of HENGIST. — *His Transactions and Wars with the* BRITONS, *and final Settlement in* KENT.

BOOK III.

HITHERTO England had been inhabited by branches of the Kimmerian and Keltic races, apparently visited by the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and afterwards occupied by the Roman military and colonists. From these successive populations it had obtained all the benefits which each could impart. But in the fifth century, the period had arrived when both England and the south of Europe were to be possessed and commanded by a new description of people, who had been gradually formed amid the wars and vicissitudes of the Germanic continent; and to be led to manners, laws, and institutions peculiarly their own, and adapted, as the great result has shown, to produce national and social improvements, superior to those which either Greece or Rome had attained. The Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain must therefore not be contemplated as a barbarisation of the country. Our Saxon ancestors brought with them a superior domestic and moral character, and the rudiments of new political, juridical, and intellectual blessings. An interval of slaughter and desolation unavoidably occurred before they

Digitized by Google

established themselves and their new systems in the island. But when they had completed their conquest, they laid the foundations of that national constitution, of that internal polity, of those peculiar customs, of that female modesty, and of that vigour and direction of mind, to which Great Britain is indebted for the social progress it has so eminently acquired. Some parts of the civilisation which they found in the island assisted to produce this great result. Their desolations removed much of the moral degeneracy we have before alluded to.

Although in the fictions of romance kingdoms fall almost at the will of the assailant, yet in real life no great revolutions of states occur, without the preparatory and concurring operation of many political causes. The Saxons had for nearly two centuries been attacking Britain, with no greater successes than the half-naked Scoti from Ireland had obtained. They plundered where they arrived unexpectedly. They were defeated when they encountered a military or naval resistance. Hengist and Ella would not have been more fortunate than their depredatory countrymen who had preceded them, if the events of the day had not by their agencies conducted them and their successors from exile and piracy, to the proprietorship and kingdoms of the English octarchy.

Amid the sovereignties into which the island was divided, and the civil distractions which this division of power produced, it appears that one ruler was made the supreme monarch, with the addition of a council of the other chiefs. The council is mentioned by all the ancient writers who treat of

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

this period[1], and Gwrtheyrn is named by each as the predominating sovereign.[2]

GWRTHEYRN is mentioned as a proud and cruel tyrant; but with these features Gildas describes the general body of the Britons, both clergy and laity.[3] Their supreme king seems to have acted only with the selfish spirit of his contemporaries, and he was surrounded with many political difficulties that would have embarrassed a wiser and a better man. His authority was disputed[4] by a chieftain of Roman parentage, whose parents had perished in the possession of the imperial purple, and to whom Gildas gives the name of Ambrosius[5] Aurelianus. The Scoti and Picts were harassing the island wherever they could penetrate[6], and a mortal distemper was raging among the people[7], which appears to have spread over a large part of

[1] As by Gildas, s. 22, 23. Nennius, c. 38, &c. Bede, p. 52. Flor. Wig. 194.

[2] Thus W. Malmsb. p. 9. "Omnes reguli insulæ Vortigerni substernebantur monarchiæ." The traditions of the Welsh that have been committed to writing notice the same plan of government. The seventh historical triad exhibits Arthur as the pen-teyrn, literally the head-king; and Maelgwn, the king of Gwynedd, as the pen-hynain, or chief elder. Welsh Archæol. vol. ii. p. 3. According to this British appellation, Gwrtheyrn was the pen-teyrn, whose supreme power was called unbenaeth, literally, the one head-ship or monarchy.

[3] See Gildas's epistola annexed to his history, p. 10—39.

[4] Nennius, c. 28.

[5] Gildas, s. 25. Nennius, c. 44. The Welsh triads call him Emrys Wledig, or king Emrys, which is the name disfigured, in the MSS. or printed copy of Nennius, into Embreis gleutic, c. 44. He is frequently mentioned in the triads. His descendants were alive in the time of Gildas, but much degenerated.

[6] Gildas, c. 20. Bede, lib. i. c. 16. The Vita S. Carentoci names the leaders of the Scoti, "In istis temporibus Scotti superaverunt Britanniam; nomina ducum quorum Briscus, Thuibaius, Machleius, Anpacus." MSS. Vesp. A. xiv. p. 90.

[7] Gildas, c. 21.

Digitized by Google

the world.[8] But the greatest affliction of Britain was the numerous petty sovereignties into which, after the departure of the Romans, it had become divided.[9] Gwrtheyrn had to encounter each of these evils, and all nearly at the same time. The country became dissatisfied at its sufferings, and its discontent increased the civil factions of the period. Royalty has no safety when the sovereign is unpopular. When the fuel of rebellion abounds in every part, the restlessness of the disturbed society seldom fails to produce events or characters which begin the fatal conflagration.

Arrival of Hengist, A.D. 449.

In this state of the country, three Saxon cyules, or vessels, arrived from Germany on or near the British coast; whose leaders were named Hengist and Horsa, two brothers, and descendants from Woden. As their numbers were too few for conquest, their visit must have been either a matter of accident, or for the purpose of a transient depredation. Nennius says, they were exiles.[10]

[8] Gildas, c. 21. Marcellinus mentions a great pestilence following a famine at Constantinople, when Ætius III. and Symmachus were consuls, ann. 446, p. 41. Scal. Euseb. Evagrius, lib. ii. c. 6., extends it over Asia and the world τὴν γῆν, p. 298. ed. Vales. Corporibus tumescentibus oculos amittebant: simulque tussi vexati tertio die moriebantur. No remedy could be found for it.

[9] The custom of gavel-kind, which prevailed among the Britons, increase this evil. In the Lives of the Welsh Saints in the Cottonian library, Vesp. A. 14. and Titus, D. 22., MSS. seemingly of the twelfth century, two striking instances of this custom are given. The Vita Cadoci, after mentioning a king who left ten sons, says of them, "paternum regnum inter se secundum eorum numerum unicuique suam provinciam diviserunt." So the Vita S. Carentoci, speaking of the son of Cunedda, states that "divisit possessiones patris sui inter fratres suos."

[10] Nennius, c. 28. Many authorities mention that the Saxons were invited, and many that they came accidentally. It is most likely that the first arrival off the island was casual, but that their landing and subsequent increase were the result of invitation.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

449.

If we estimate the number of these Saxons, from the size of the Danish vessels in a subsequent age, they could not have exceeded three hundred men[11]; and there is no reason to believe that the Saxon ships, as they are mentioned by Sidonius, were larger. They may have been some of the Saxons, who were at this time supporting the Armorici, and hovering on the coast of France.

They arrived at Ebbs-fleet[12], in the Isle of Thanet, near Richborough. The king and British chiefs were at that time holding a public council, on the best means to repel their Irish and Scottish enemies, and it was agreed to employ these Saxon adventurers as subsidiary soldiers.[13] They were accordingly retained to serve against the northern invaders, the Pihtas, Scoti, and other foes; they were promised food and clothing, and were stationed in Thanet.[14] Their first exertions are stated

[11] Gildas, Bede, Flor. Wigorn. Malmsbury, H. Huntingd. and others, mention the ships, but not the number of men. Verstegan and his authority, p. 126., and Speed, Hist. 291., outrage probability so far as to crowd 9000 into these three ships.—The Danish ships of a subsequent age had 100 men in each. Herv. Sag. p. 25.—Lazamon gives the probable number, "Threo scipen gode comen mid than flode, threo hundred cnihten," MSS. Cott. Calig. A. 9. p. 79.

[12] Or Ypwines fleot, Sax. Chronicle, 12. It was near the estuary of the Wanstum, which divides Thanet from the main land of Kent.—The Wanstum was once navigable for ships of large burthen. See Batteley Ant. Rutup. 13. In Bede's time it was three stadia broad, and fordable only in two places, lib. 1. c. 25. It is now, at Reculver, one of its entrances, a brook which may be stepped over, and in its centre, towards the Sarr road, is not six feet broad. Ebbsfleet is now an inland spot at some distance from the sea.—Sarr was a naval station formerly, and some old drawings still exist, which represent a man with a ferry-boat at this place.

[13] Gildas, s. 22. Nen. c. 28. The British poem of Golyddan indignantly alludes to this council. Welsh Arch. v. i. p. 156.

[14] Gildas, s. 13. Nennius, s. 28. 35. The ancient British name of Thanet was Ruithina. Nen. c. 28.

Digitized by Google

to have been directed against the Irish and Picts, in just performance of their engagement, and with immediate success.[15] But it was not enough to repress one incursion of these active enemies. It was their habit to attack, plunder, retire, and return; and if one quarter was too well guarded, to attempt another. All pirates in every age use this policy, and exhibit this perseverance. Hence it was not enough to have repelled the first assailants; and to do more, larger forces were requisite. But as the numbers which had come with Hengist were few, it was natural that he should recommend the invitation of more of his countrymen, if they were to be used for the purpose of continued military[16] defence. The king assented; and they sent to their native land for further supplies.[17]

But we must not resort to Wittichind for the speech of the ambassadors. Though a Saxon himself, he appears to have been completely ignorant of the Saxon antiquities.[18] We can conceive the application to have been an address to the courage

[15] Bede, lib. i. c. 15. p. 52. Sax. Ch. p. 12. Ethelwerd, lib. i. p. 833.

[16] Nennius, s. 37.

[17] I would place at this period, as well as at their first arrival, that invitation which Bede, lib. i. c. 15., Ethelwerd, 833., Sax. Chron. 12., and others, affirm.

[18] He was the biographer of his contemporary, Otho, who died 972. Sigebert 1196. Germ. Quat. Celeb. Chron. — He addresses his Saxon history to Matilda, Otho's maiden daughter. He knows nothing of the Saxons prior to their entering Thuringia. He was so ignorant of them as to say, that the Saxons in England were called Angli-Saxones, because the island was in a sort of angle of the sea. P. 3. he says, when he was a boy, he heard of the Macedonian extraction of the Saxons. If the Saxons sprang from the Sacasenæ, who lived near Persia, which is the most probable account of their origin, traditions connected with the battles of Alexander might have remained with them, as with the nations in the East; but this is a subject too illusory to deserve any attention. If it be worth recollecting at all, it is merely as another tradition pointing to their Eastern origin.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 449.

and spirit of adventure of the youth of Jutland, from which Hengist had sailed.[19] Hengist may have added, as a lure, the probability of greater aggrandisement; but the lofty projects of ambition are not the first conceptions of humbler fortunes: auspicious events gradually teach hope to be more aspiring. One unexpected success occasions a further elevation to be attempted, until a greatness, at one time the most improbable, is attained with a facility which surprises the adventurer. But in the beginning of his employment, it is not probable that Hengist, with his scanty means, could have projected the conquest of a country so well peopled as Britain. It was the civil feuds, divided sovereignties, and warring interests of the unhappy island, and events not before anticipated, which also arise in disturbed periods of society, that led him to perceive that permanent settlements were attainable, and to desire their acquisition. Hence we need not fancy that his primary invitations held out magnificent hopes, or that his first friendly allies came in search of thrones. The sword of the Saxon was ready for every enterprise; war and booty were his high-prized pleasures; and it is probable, that at the first call of Hengist many thronged, who knew only that they were to fight and to be rewarded.

The Saxons at that time had, as we have already described, spread from the Elbe to the Rhine; and the old Saxon Chronicler describes them to have then been active in depredation on all the sea-coast from Holland to Denmark.[20]

[19] Bede, p. 52.

[20] Ethelwerd, p. 833. His Chronicle ends with Edgar, about whose time he lived. He derives himself from Ethelred, the brother of Alfred, p. 831. It is a rude but valuable Chronicle.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

449.

THE subsequent actions of Hengist are not satisfactorily detailed in our oldest writers: their great result, the occupation of Britain by the Anglo-Saxon nations, and the consequent defeats and sufferings of the Britons, are strongly but generally expressed. Few of the accompanying circumstances are noticed, and these, it is not easy to arrange under any definite chronology. All that criticism can do is to select the incidents that seem indisputable, and to add the remarks which they naturally suggest.

IT was not until the seventh year after his arrival in England that Hengist is stated to have begun his kingdom in Kent.[21] Thus a period of six years intervened between his entrance and his establishment; and this interval was occupied by three classes of events, which are all mentioned, though not circumstantially narrated. These were his conflicts with the Picts and Irish,—his alliance and friendship with Gwrtheyrn and the Britons,—and his subsequent hostilities against them, and final conquest of Kent into a kingdom, which he transmitted to his posterity. These events followed in the order thus stated; but the time which each occupied cannot now be discriminated.

THE consequences of admitting and employing Hengist and his followers became so calamitous to the Britons, that the original policy of the measure has been generally reprobated. But this was not

[21] The Saxon Chronicle expressly states, that *after* the battle in 455, in which Horsa fell, Hengist acquired his little kingdom; æfter tham Hengest feng to rice, p. 13. The more ancient Ethelwerd has the same date, with et Hengest cepit regnum, p. 834. Henry of Huntingdon dates his acquisition one year later, p. 311.; and Florence of Worcester one year earlier, p. 204. Nennius, without specifying the exact year, indicates a similar interval.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 449.

the single act of Gwrtheyrn. It was the unanimous resolution of the national council of kings and chiefs who decided for its adoption. It appeared to them to be an expedient means of protecting the coasts of the island from the maritime desolations of the Irish and Picts, that one set of barbarians should be hired to combat the others; for in the eyes of the Romanised Britons all these piratical invaders were deemed barbarians, and are so mentioned. The purposed utility of the measure was immediately attained. Hengist defeated the depredators, with a slaughter which at last ended their incursions.[22] To have foreseen at the outset, that the employment of a few hundred Saxons for this purpose would have induced the whole nation of the Angli, and a large portion of the continental Saxons and Jutes, to expatriate themselves from their domestic hearths into Britain, required a power of prophetic vision, which it was no disgrace to the Britons to have wanted. No such event had at that time occurred to the island. The Saxons were not, like the Romans, a mighty and civilised empire, whose ambition had been rapaciously progressive. They had been but petty and partial depredators; active, bold, and persevering, but whom moderate exertions of military vigilance had always repelled. Hence Gwrtheyrn and the British council had no reason to anticipate the new spirit of permanent dominion and territorial conquest, with which so large a portion of the Saxon confederation became afterwards inspired; and still less, their power of effectuating such ambitious resolutions.

[22] W. Malm. lib. i. p. 9.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I. 449.

THE censure to which the Britons are more justly liable is, that when these intentions began to appear, no vigorous system of union and patriotic resistance was adopted to frustrate their completion. On this point the evils of their political system, and the bad passions of Gwrtheyrn, operated to destroy the independence of the country. The chiefs pursued their conflicts with each other, which the people supported; and Gwrtheyrn projected to use the aid of Hengist against those who were jealous of his power, or had become his competitors.

WHEN Hengist obtained permission to increase his forces, as the island was accessible on so many points of attack, by enemies who came by sea, and chose their own places of operation, this augmentation was necessary to the country while it continued the policy of using foreign auxiliaries. Seventeen more chiules came with his daughter Rowena[23]; and afterwards forty more, with his son and kinsman, plundering the Orkneys and Scotland in their way, who were stationed off the Scottish coast, near the wall.[24]

FOR these services an interval of cordiality occurred between Hengist and the[25] Britons. That Hengist invited Gwrtheyrn to a feast, at which the fair and blue-eyed Rowena officiated as the cup-

[23] Nenn. c. 36. Malmsbury, p. 9., mentions her with an "ut accepimus:" and H. Huntingdon with a "dicitur a quibusdam," p. 310. The Welsh Triads, c. 38., call her Ronwen, and some of the later Welsh poems allude to her; but there seems no historical authority for her existence, except the brief passages of Nennius, which Jeffry of Monmouth, and from him Wace and Layamon have so copiously expanded, and to which Malmsbury and Huntingdon seem to allude.

[24] Nen. c. 37.

[25] Ethelw. 833.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 455. bearer, till the British king became intoxicated, both with wine and love, and at last obtained her for his wife, we must believe, if at all, on the credit of Nennius.[26] But the burthen of their remuneration diminished the gratitude of the Britons; and the martial vigour, which had produced the successes of the Saxons, alarmed those whom they had benefited. The object for which they had been engaged having been attained, the natives wished their departure: but military adventurers have no proper homes; having abandoned peaceful life and its comforts for the fame and advantages of daring warfare in other countries, their new habits and gratifications are inconsistent with the quiet and content of agricultural obscurity. The Saxon-Jutes refused to leave their station in Thanet: they demanded larger supplies; and stated that they must plunder for their subsistence if these were refused.[27] The Britons had the spirit to resent their requisition, but not the wisdom to combine to expel them; and the third class of incidents, to which we have alluded, began.

THE Saxons made peace with the Picts, collected their forces, and, imitating those whom they had been employed to repress, ravaged the nearest cities and countries, from the east sea to the west.[28] The desolations that followed are strongly painted. Public and private edifices destroyed, priests slain at the altars, and chieftains with their people: some part of the population flying to monasteries, others to forests and mountains, and many to foreign parts, imply the successful ravages which the first

[26] Nen. c. 36. [27] Bede, lib. i. c. 15. p. 53. [28] Ibid.

Digitized by Google

assaults of Hengist and his Jutes effected, against the unprepared and astonished natives.[29] CHAP. I. 455.

But these victorious depredations could not long continue. These evils aroused the Britons to wiser policy and to a courageous resistance. Self-love produced the conduct which no patriotism had suggested. A vigorous system of defence was resolved upon, and Guortemir, a son of Gwrtheyrn, was appointed to conduct it. A series of battles occurred between him and Hengist and Horsa, in which victory was alternate. It is expressly stated by Nennius, that Guortemir three times defeated and besieged Hengist and his Jutes, and at last expelled them from Thanet and from England. He adds, that for five years they were kept out of the island, till Guortemir's death.[30] As Gildas asserts that the invaders at one time returned home[31]; and Bede, though a Saxon, admits the fact by inserting it in his history[32]; as Hengist did not begin his reign in Kent till six years after his arrival in the island[33]; and as there are some foreign traditions of his having founded Leyden, during his absence from England[34], his temporary expulsion, and the successful exertions of the Britons at this period, seem entitled to our belief.

The Britons who combined against Hengist were headed by two sons of Gwrtheyrn, who are named Guortemir and Categirn. On the Derwent

[29] Bede, lib. i. c. 15. p. 53.
[30] Nenn. c. 45.
[31] Gildas, c. 25.
[32] Bede, lib. i. c. 16. p. 53.
[33] See before, note 21. p. 258.
[34] Usher, in his Primordia Eccl. Anglic. p. 420., extracts a passage to this effect from the Chronicon of Gerbrandus, who died 1504. I do not know his authorities. Kempius, in his Rer. Frisic. lib. ii. c. 1. affirms the same. Usher adds, that "Dousa, Meursius, Hegenitius, &c. *Vulgata Hollandiæ chronica* sequuti," also report it, p. 420.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

455. the first struggle occurred[35]; the next at a place called the Ford of the Eagles, now Aylesford in Kent, was distinguished by the death of Horsa on the part of the Saxons, and of Categirn among the Britons[36]; a third battle was fought at Stonar, on the sea shore fronting France, from which the Saxons fled to their chiules.[37] Guortemir was the British chieftain who commanded in all these conflicts. But fable has obscured his title to celebrity. We may concede to him all the praise that Cambrian affection can demand, without believing that he pulled up a tree by the roots, and with the vegetating club killed Horsa, and defeated the Saxons.[38] Courage has been always the characteristic of the Cymry, and they may disclaim, without injury to their glory, every impossible achievement.

Guortemir dying, Hengist is stated to have returned with an augmentation of his forces, which proved ultimately irresistible[39]; but he is described as having first regained a footing in the island, by the treacherous massacre of the British chieftains at a banquet. The account of Nennius represents him not only as soliciting a treaty of peace, which was closed by the invitation of the Britons to a friendly feast, but also as commanding his

[35] Nennius, c. 46.

[36] Sax. Chron. 13. Ethelw. 834. Nennius gives the British name of the place as Sathenegabail, p. 110.; but his British names of places and persons have been badly transcribed. On Horsa's monument, see Gough's Camden, vol. 1. p. 231.

[37] Nenn. c. 46, 47. Batteley thinks that the site of this battle was Stone-end, in the south corner of Kent. Ant. Rutup. p. 19. There still remains a great quantity of human bones under the church at Hythe, which imply that some great battle has been fought in its vicinity. Nennius calls the stone, from which the field was named, "The Stone of the Title." Unless this means the boundary of the kingdom or county of Kent, the subject of the allusion is lost.

[38] Nenn. c. 45.

[39] Nenn. c. 46, 47.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

455.

Saxons to come with their short swords under their garments, and on his exclaiming, "Nimed eure saxes," "Unsheath your swords," to slay all but Gwrtheyrn. The meeting was held, and the cruel perfidy was accomplished.[40] It cannot now be determined how much, or if any part, of this is true; or whether the fatal issue, if it occurred, is to be attributed to premeditated villany. One Welsh bard, two centuries afterwards, alludes to a catastrophe like this, but with no distinctness of historical detail.[41]

As Nennius adds to the history of Gwrtheyrn incidents undeniably fictitious[42], and inserts fables as decided about St. Germain, in circumstances which the true chronology of the bishop disproves[43], he may have equally invented, or at least have

[40] Nenn. c. 48.

[41] The passage in Golyddan is,—

When they bargained for Thanet, with such scanty discretion,
With Hors and Hengys in their violent career,
Their aggrandisement was to us disgraceful,
After the consuming secret with the slaves at the confluent stream.
Conceive the intoxication at the great banquet of Mead;
Conceive the deaths in the great hour of necessity;
Conceive the fierce wounds: the tears of the women:
The grief that was excited by the weak chief:
Conceive the sadness that will be revolving to us,
When the brawlers of Thanet shall be our princes.
Gol. Arym. 2. W. Arch. 156.

The only words here that imply any premeditated treachery are, "rhin dilain," the consuming or destroying secret, which in the Cambrian Register for 1796 are translated too freely, "The plot of death."

[42] See his Stories, from c. 38 to c. 44.

[43] Nennius, c. 29, 30, &c. St. Germain was bishop of Auxerre, from 418 to 448. Fabricius, Bibl. Med. lib. vii. p. 139. He lived thirty years and five days after St. Amator, according to his ancient biographer Constantius. Amator died in 418, Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit. p. 209. Bede also errs in placing the visit of St. Germain into Britain, to oppose their Pelagian opinions, *after* the arrival of the Saxons.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

455. exaggerated this event. A feast, inebriation, an unpremeditated quarrel, and a conflict may have taken place; and the battle may have ended in the destruction of the Britons. But this is all that is credible of this celebrated catastrophe; and even this statement is rather a concession to an ancient tradition, than the admission of an historical fact.

457. THE great battle which, according to the Saxon chroniclers, completed the establishment of Hengist in Kent, was fought at Crayford, in 457. The Britons, defeated in this with great slaughter, abandoned Kent, and fled in terror to London.[44] Eight years afterwards, the Britons attacked Hengist again, but it was with ruin to themselves. And in 473, they attempted another battle with him, but with such a calamitous issue, that they are declared to have fled from the Saxons as from fire.[45]

THE name of Hengist has been surrounded with terror, and all his steps with victory. From Kent, he is affirmed to have carried devastation into the remotest corners of the island; to have spared neither age, sex, nor condition; to have slaughtered the priests on the altars; to have butchered in heaps the people who fled to the mountains and deserts[46]; and to have finally established his dominion in Kent, Essex, Middlesex, and Sussex. But when from these hyperboles of conquest, we turn

[44] Sax. Chron. "And tha Bryttas tha forleton Centlond," p. 313. It is from this victory that Huntingdon dates the kingdom of Hengist, p. 311.

[45] Sax. Chron. p. 14. Flo. Wig. 200, 201.

[46] This statement is seriously given by Hume, p. 20., and by our venerable Milton. 1 Kennett's Collection of Histor. 37. Langhorn, p. 38., follows Jeffry, and adds York, Lincoln, London, and Winchester to his conquests.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

457.

to the simple and authentic facts, that all the battles of Hengist, particularised by the Saxons, were fought in Kent; that one of the last contests was even in Thanet, in the extremity of his little kingdom[47], and that no good evidence is extant of his having penetrated, except in his first depredations, beyond the region which he transmitted[48] to his posterity; and, above all, that at this very period the Britons were so warlike that twelve thousand went to Gaul, on the solicitations of the emperor, to assist the natives against the Visigoths[49], we must perceive that exaggeration has been as busy with Hengist as with Arthur; and that modern historians have suffered their criticism to slumber, while they were perusing the confused declamations of Gildas and his copyist Bede. What Gildas related as the general consequences of all the Saxon invasions has been too hastily applied to the single instance of Hengist. From this error the misconception of his real history has arisen. The truth seems to be, that the fame of Hengist depends more on the circumstance of his having first conceived and executed the project of a hostile settlement in Britain, than on the magnitude of his conquests, or the extent of his devastations.

For twelve years after the battle at Wippeds

[47] Wippedfleet.

[48] Mr. Carte has observed, that he never extended his territories beyond Kent. Hist. England, p. 198. Mr. Whitaker is of a similar opinion. Manchest. ii. 4to. p. 28.

[49] The expedition of Riothamus, mentioned in Sidon. Apollon. lib. iii. ep. 9., and Jornandes, c. 45. This incident was early noticed by Freculphus, Chron. t. ii. c. 17. — Sigebert Gembl. in mentioning it gives a gentle lash on Jeffry: Quis autem fuerit iste, historia Britonum minime dicit, quæ regum suorum nomina et gesta per ordinem pandit. 1 Pist. 504. Either this Riothamus was Arthur, or it was from his expedition that Jeffry, or the Breton bards, took the idea of Arthur's battles in Gaul.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Fleot, he remained alone exposed to the vengeance of all the Britons in the island, except those in
457. Kent, whom he had subdued. The ease with which he seems to have maintained his extorted dominion announces the continuance of the discord between the contending native chieftains, which was wasting the British strength[50], and which Gildas seems to
465. protract to the times of Arthur. At length another adventurer appeared on the island. The success of Hengist made a new species of enterprise familiar to the Saxon states. To combine to obtain riches, cultivated lands, and slaves to tend them, was more inviting than to risk the tempest for uncertain plunder. Hence it is not wonderful, that while some were diffusing themselves over Germany, the success of Hengist attracted the maritime part of the Saxon confederation; and assisted to convert it from naval piracy to views of regular conquest in Britain.

Hengist was succeeded in Kent by his son Æsc, who reigned twenty-four years. No subsequent event of importance is recorded of this little kingdom, till the reign of Ethelbyrhte, who acceded in 560[51], and enjoyed the sceptre for above half a century.[52]

[50] Gildas, in his last section, and in his epistle, and Bede, c. 22. An abrupt but valuable passage of Nennius, p. 118., also intimates that Ambrosius was connected with the civil fury at this period: "A regno Guorthrigerni usque ad discordiam Guitolini et Ambrosii anni sunt duodecim." Huntingdon declares, "Non cessabant civilia bella," p. 311. And see the Lives of the Welsh Saints, MSS. Vesp. A. 14.

[51] Sax. Ch. p. 20.

[52] Flor. Wig. dates his accession 561, and gives fifty-six years as the duration of his reign, p. 221. The names by which Alfred translates the title of duces, which Bede gives to Hengist and Horsa, are Latteowas and Heretogan, p. 483. The British king, whom Jeffry calls Vortigernus, and the Welsh writings Gwrtheyrn, Alfred names Wyrtgeorn, p. 482.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

Ella arrives in Sussex, and founds a Kingdom there. — Cerdic invades the South Part of the Island, and establishes the Kingdom of Wessex. — Battles of his Successors with the Britons.

CHAP. II.

Ella was the next Saxon chieftain, or king, who, twenty-eight years after the first arrival of Hengist, invaded Britain. He landed with three sons in Sussex[1]; and drove the Britons into the great wood, which stretched from the south of Kent into Sussex and Hampshire.[2] Although they came with but three ships, they succeeded in gaining a settlement. Hence we may infer, that they were resisted only by the petty British sovereign of the district. By slow degrees they enlarged their conquests on the coast. In the eighth year of their arrival they attempted to penetrate into the interior; a dubious but wasteful battle on the river Mercread checked their progress. Recruited by new arrivals from the Continent, they ventured to besiege Andredes Ceaster, a city strongly fortified according to the usages of the age. The Britons defended this with some skill. Taking advantage of the adjoining forest, while the Saxons attempted

477. Arrival of Ella.

490.

[1] Saxon Chron. 14. Flor. Wigorn. 203. Ethelwerd, 834.

[2] The weald of Kent was anciently 120 miles long towards the west, and 30 broad from north to south. On the edge of the wood, in Sussex, stood Andredes Ceaster. Lambard's Perambulation of Kent, 167, 168. This vast wood was a wilderness, not inhabited by men, but by deer and hogs.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 490.

to scale the walls, a division of the Britons attacked them from the woods behind: to repel them the Saxons were compelled to desist from their assault on the city. The Britons retired from the pressure of their attack into the woods, sallying out again when the Saxons again advanced to the city. This plan was successfully repeated with great loss to the assailants, till Ella conceived the idea of dividing his Saxons into two bodies; one to storm, the other to cover the attack.[3] This measure succeeded, and the Saxons burst into the city; but, irritated by their loss, disgraced their conquest by one of those barbarous actions which history ought never to mention without horror, and which no events or reasons can justify: the inhabitants were put to the sword.[4] This was a conquest not far distant from the shore; so that this Saxon kingdom was rather permitted by the Britons to exist than extorted from their national opposition. Ella's settlement was probably considered as a colonisation, that would have no important consequences to the British people. It became the kingdom of Sussex.

As this state was never formidable to the others, nor is much mentioned afterward, there is no reason to imagine that Ella made any great progress; but Ella is commemorated as the preponderant Saxon chief[5] at that time in England: his

[3] Hen. Hunt. p. 312. He adds, that the city was never rebuilt, but remained apparently in his times in a state of ruin, which showed to the passenger how noble a place it had been.

[4] Sax. Chron. 15. "Ne wearth thær forthon an Bryt to lafe." Our ancient chroniclers make often small differences in their chronologies. Thus the Sax. Chron. dates this event in 490, Flor. Wig. 491, and Ethelwerd, 492.

[5] Sax. Chron. 71. Bede, lib. ii. c. 5.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

conquests were therefore superior to those of Hengist and his son, who were his contemporaries. This is another circumstance, which shows the mistake of attributing such extensive desolation and triumphs to Hengist. Both he and Ella appear to have been satisfied with the possession of the provinces they invaded. It was the next warrior who spread consternation through Britain, resisted the genius of Ambrosius and Arthur, and by his successes ensured safety to the intruders in Kent and Sussex.

490.

495. Invasion of Cerdic.

EIGHTEEN years after Ella, another powerful colony of Saxons arrived in the island, under the auspices of Cerdic, who also derived his genealogy from Woden.[6] The first essay was made with five ships; but the battles and conquests of its leaders display either abilities of the most superior kind, or an accumulation of force far beyond that which had assailed the other parts of the island. The place of his primary descent is by no means clear. The modern name, which would correspond with the ancient appellation of Cerdices Ora, has not been preserved.[7] Both Yarmouth and[8] Southampton have had their advocates; but

[6] Sax. Chron. 15. Flor. Wig. 205. Cerdic was the ninth descendant from Woden by his son Bœldæg, and his great grandson Freothogar. Allowing thirty years for a generation, this would place the existence of Odin about 225, which is near the time when the Francs accomplished their voyage from the Euxine.

[7] Yet Higden, in his Polychronicon, makes Cerdicesore that quæ nunc dicitur Gernemouth, p. 224., which (if we could rely upon it) would decide that Yarmouth was the spot. Camden mentions a striking fact in favour of the claims of Yarmouth, "The place is called by the inhabitants at this day, Cerdicksand." Britan. 390. Gib.

[8] This position is thought to be warranted by comparing the Saxon Chron. p. 18., which mentions the arrival of the nepotes of Cerdic at Cerdicesora, in 514, and Matt. West., who states their arrival in oc-

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

a remarkable passage in the Saxon Chronicle, which indicates that he attacked West Saexnaland

495. six years after his arrival[9] induces a belief that his first attempt was on some other part of the island.

501. In the same year that Cerdic assaulted the district afterwards denominated Wessex, a band of his allies, under Porta, effected a landing with the companies of two ships at Portsmouth, and defeated the Britons.[10] Others came thirteen years afterwards, under Stuf and Wihtgar.

It was in the battles with Cerdic that the strength of the Britons and Saxons seem to have been first opposed to each other with a national magnitude, and for many years with varying success. It was not till twenty-four years after his arrival that Cerdic and his son are noticed to have established the kingdom of Wessex.[11] Of the conflicts which he had with the Britons during these twenty-four years, the Saxons have left scarcely any notice. As Cerdic did not arrive in any part of England till forty-six years after Hengist, he found a new generation of Britons, with different kings and chiefs from those who had employed and fought with the conqueror of Kent. Gwrtheyrn, Guor-

cidentali parte Britanniæ, p. 184.; but this is not conclusive evidence. Mr. Whitaker thinks, that all Cerdic's operations were confined to Hampshire, vol. ii. p. 61.

[9] Sax. Chron. p. 15. So Ethelwerd, 834. Sexto etiam anno adventus eorum occidentalem circumierunt Britanniæ partem quæ Westsexe nuncupatur.

[10] Sax. Chron. p. 17. Flor. Wig. 205. Ethelw. 834.

[11] Thus the Sax. Chron. 519. "Her Cerdic and Cynric West-Saexna rice onfengun," p. 18. Flor. Wig. "regnare cœperunt," p. 208. Ethelwerd, "in ipso anno facietenus cœperunt regnare," p. 834. So Huntingdon to the same date, "Regnum West Sexe incipit," p. 313.

Digitized by Google

temir, and Ambrosius, had long been dead. The Britons were in possession of all the island but Kent and Sussex; and when Cerdic attacked them, they were at liberty to have employed all their forces against him, as Ida had not yet arrived, nor had the Angles expatriated themselves. 501.

THE only British king whom the Saxons mention in the battles that preceded the establishment of this West Saxon kingdom was Natanleod, and he appears but in one great battle, in which he fell in 508.[12] This was something like a national conflict between the two contesting races. Cerdic increased his own strength by auxiliary forces from the Saxons in Kent and Sussex, and Natanleod assembled the greatest army of Britons that had yet met the Saxons together. He directed his main attack on their right wing, where Cerdic commanded, and drove it from the field; but, too eager in pursuit, he allowed this chieftain's son to move on him in the rear, and the victory was wrenched from his grasp.[13] He fell with 5000 Britons; and such was the extent of his disaster, that all the region near the scene of conflict became afterwards called by his name.[14] This victory gave Cerdic a firm position in the island, though it did not enable him yet to found a kingdom. 508.

THE subsequent battles of Cerdic and his friends with the Britons, which the Saxon writers have recorded, are but few. In 514 his kinsmen, Stuf and Wihtgar, made their incursion on Cerdicesore. In 519 Cerdic and his Son Cynric obtained a victory at Cerdices-ford, which appears to have first laid

[12] Sax. Chron. p. 18. Flor. Wig. 206. Ethelwerd, 834.
[13] H. Hunt, 312. [14] Sax. Chron.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

the actual foundation of the West-Saxon kingdom, as from this time the Saxon Chronicle dates the
508. reign of the West-Saxon kings.[15] The struggle lasted the whole day with varying success, but in the evening the Saxons conquered.[16] In 528, another conflict is mentioned at Cerdices-leah, but its issue is not stated: and, in 530, Cerdic and his son took the Isle of Wight with great slaughter. In 534, Cerdic died.[17] He does not appear to have done more than to have maintained himself in the district where he landed; but his posterity enlarged his settlement into a kingdom, so powerful as to absorb every other in the island.

552. His son Cynric defeated the Britons at Searobyrig; and four years afterwards at Beranbirig.[18]
556. In this last battle the Britons made peculiar exertions to overcome their invaders. They collected a large army; and, taught by former defeat the evil of disorderly combats, their leaders attempted an imitation of better discipline. They were formed into nine divisions; three in front, three in the centre, and three in the rear, apparently to act as a reserve; their archers and horse were arranged like the Romans. The Saxons observing the array, condensed themselves into one compact body, and made an attack in this mass which proved irresistible.[19]

[15] "Her Cerdic and Cynric West Seaxna rice onfengun:" after mentioning the battle, it adds, "siththan ricsadon West Seaxa cynebearn of tham dæge." Sax. Chron. p. 18.

[16] Hen. Hunt. 313. Camden places the battle at a ford of the Avon, at the place now called Charford, in Hampshire.

[17] Sax. Chr. 20. Flor. Wig. 219. I think Somner goes too far from the line of Cerdic's operations, when he guesses this to be Chardsley, in Buckinghamshire.

[18] Sax. Ch. 20. Flor. Wig. 220. This is placed at Banbury, in Oxfordshire; the other at Salisbury.

[19] H. Hunt. p. 314. This ancient author, from sources now lost,

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

It was Cealwin, the third king of Wessex, who acceded in 560, that obtained the greatest successes against the natives, and took from them more of their country than his predecessors had been able to subdue. His brother defeated the Britons at Bedford, and dispossessed them of four towns[20]; and six years afterwards Cealwin himself obtained a great victory at Deorham, against three British kings, who fell in the battle; Conmail, Condidan, and Farinmail. The number of these kings shows that the former ruinous division of the British strength continued in the island, though its rulers had at times sufficient policy to combine their efforts. This appears to have been a conflict of some magnitude, as well from the union of the three kings, as from the important results of the victory; for three of the great cities of the Britons, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, submitted after it to the conqueror.[21] Seven years afterwards, in 584, the Britons again tried the fortune of war with him at Fethanleagh: a son of Cealwin fell in the struggle, and the Saxons retreated in disorder; but their king succeeded in rallying them, and at last acquired a hard-earned and long-contested triumph. He obtained much booty and many towns; but as the Saxon chronicler remarks that he after-

556.

571.

has preserved the particular circumstances of several of these Saxon battles. He seems to have had a military tact which led him to notice them. He had certainly other chronicles before him than those which have survived to us.

[20] Lygeanburh, Ægeles-burh, Benningtun, and Egonesham. Chr. Sax. p. 22. These are supposed by Gibson to be Leighton, in Bedfordshire; Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire; Bensington and Ensham, in Oxfordshire.

[21] Chr. Sax. p. 22. F. Wig. 223. Ethelw. 835. Durham, in Gloucestershire, is believed to have been the site of this battle.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 571.

wards retired into his own district[22], the Britons were still powerful enough to prevent or discourage his advance.

SUCH is the Saxon statement of the battles which attended the establishment and progress of the formidable kingdom of Wessex; by which we find that eighty-two years elapsed after the arrival of Cerdic, before it was extended to include Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath. Its first acquisition was Hampshire, by Cerdic. It was enlarged into Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, by his son; and by his grandson into Gloucestershire and part of Somersetshire. But after these successes, it was still flanked on the west by British kingdoms in Cornwall, Devonshire, and part of Somersetshire; and on the north-west by the British princes in Wales; and by British states or kingdoms on the north, from Gloucestershire to Scotland. On the south at the sea-coast it was supported by the Saxon kingdoms of Sussex and Kent. But if the nation of the Angles had not successively arrived after Cerdic's death, to over-run the east, the centre, and the country beyond the Humber, the Saxon occupation of Britain would have been a precarious tenure, or have remained, like Normandy in France, but a Saxon colonisation of our southern shores. It was the emigration of the Angles from Sleswick that ultimately wrested the island from the ancient Britons, and converted it into England. But before we narrate this great incident, which has so peculiarly affected our national fortunes and character, we will pause to consider the ancient British accounts of their conflicts with the West-Saxon invaders.

[22] Gehwearf thonan to his agenum, Ch. Sax. p. 22.

Digitized by Google

SAXON GENEALOGIES.

As some of the Saxon poetry and MSS. allude to persons whose names do not appear in the chronicles which have come down to us, but which are mentioned among the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon kings, it may be useful to insert some of their most authentic genealogies. These are also important for indicating Woden to have been a real personage, and for assisting us to annex a reasonable chronology to his historical existence. They furnish us also with five of Woden's ancestors.

Saxon Chronicle.

Woden
Wecta
Witta
Wihtgils
Hengist; Horsa. p. 13.

Geata
Godwulf
Finn
Frithowulf
Freotholaf
Woden. p. 19.

Woden
Bældæg
Brand
Freothogar
Freawine
Wig
Giwis
Esla
Elesa
Cerdic. p. 15. 20.

Woden
Bældæg
Brand
Beonoc
Aloc
Angenwit
Ingin
Esa
Eoppa
Ida. p. 19.

Woden
Wægdæg
Sigear
Swæfdæg
Sigegeat
Sæbald
Sæfugl
Westerfalcna
Wilgis
Uscfrea
Yffa
Ella. p. 20.

Woden
Wihtlæg
Wærmund
Offa
Angeltheow
Eomor
Icel
Cnebba
Cynewold
Cryda
Wybba
Penda. p. 28.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Of these ancestors of Penda, the very ancient Sveno Aggo notices, with some detail of incidents, Wœrmund and Offa. Langb. Script. p. 1. D. 1. p. 45.

HENRY OF HUNTINGDON.

Kent.
- Jeta
- Filii Dei
- Flocwald
- Fin
- Fredulf
- Frealof
- WODEN
- Vecta
- Wicta
- Widgils
- HENGIST and HORSA, p. 311.

Essex.
- Saxnat
- Andesc
- Gesac
- Spœwe
- Segewlf
- Biedcan
- Offa
- Erchenwin, 1st king. p. 313.

Northumberland.
- Heata
- Godwlf
- Fin
- Fredulf
- Fredalaf
- WODEN
- Beldet
- Brand
- Beonoc
- Aloc
- Angenwit
- Ingiuni
- Esc
- Eope
- IDA. p. 314.

Northumbria.
- Fredealaf
- WODEN
- Wepdeg
- Sigegeat
- Seabald
- Sefugel
- Westrefalcna
- Witgils
- Uscfrea
- Iffa
- ELLA. p. 314.

ETHELWERD.

- WOTHEN
- Withar
- Wicta
- Wyrhtelsi. p. 833.
- WOTHEN
- Wither
- Wicta
- Wihtgils. p. 836.

SIMEON OF DURHAM.

- Strefius
- Bedweg
- Guala
- Hadra
- Stermon
- Heremod

Digitized by Google

Sceaf
Sceldius
Beowi
Tecti
Geti
Godwlf
Finn
Frelaf
Fridewold
WODEN. p. 1.

Beoda
Godewlf
Fenn
Freothwulf
Freothlas
WODEN. p. 1.

WODEN
Beldeg

Brond
Fridegar
Frewin
Wig
Giwi
Esli
Elesi
CERDU. p. 1.

WODEN
Beldeg
Brond
Benoc
Aloth
Angenwi
Ingui
Esa
Eoppa
IDA. p. 1.

NENNIUS.

WODEN
Beldeg
Beornec
Gethbrond
Aluson
Inguet
Edibrith
Ossa
Eobba
IDA

WODEN
Casser
Titinou
Trigil
Rodnum
Keppan
Guithelin
Guechan. He first reigned in Britain over the East Anglians

WODEN
Guedolgeat
Gueagon
Guithleg
Guerdmund
Ossa
Origen
Eamer
Pubba

WODEN
Beldeyg
Brond
Siggar
Sibald
Zegulfh
Soemil. He first conquered Deira and Bernicia
Sguerthing

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

PENDA. 3 Gall. p. 116.	Guilgles
	Ulfrea
	Iffi, Ulli, or ELLA.

On these genealogies we may remark, that they mention four sons of Woden, and deduce distinct descendants from each; that they give also Woden's ancestry; and as the different kings must have preserved their own pedigrees, the tendency of the whole is to make Woden a real personage.

If we take 30 years as the average life of each of the descendants, these genealogies place the chronology of Woden between 200 and 300 years after the Christian æra. Thus Cerdic's nine ancestors from 496, the date of his invasion, would, on this computation, place Woden 225 years after Christ; Ida's nine from 547, in 277; Ella's eleven from 560, in 230; Penda's eleven from 626, in 296.

The four from Hengist would make him one generation later, but this looks like an imperfect genealogy.

One of the most ancient ICELANDIC documents that now exist is the LANGFEDGATAL. It was used both by Ara Frode and by Snorre. It calls Odin the king of the Tyrkia, who are supposed to be Turks, and gives him the following ancestry, deducing him from THOR:—

Japhet	Einridi
Japhans	Vingethorr
Zechim	Vingener
Ciprus	Moda
Celius	Magi
Saturnus of Krit	Seskef, or Sescef
Jupiter	Bedwig
Darius	Athra
Erichhonius	Itormann
Troes	Heremotr
Ilus	Scealdna
Lamedon	Beaf
Priam, King of Troy	Eat
Minon, or Memnon, who married Priam's daughter	Godulf
	Finn
Their son was Tror, whom we call THOR, the father of Hloritha	Frealaf
	VODEN, whom we call ODEN

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

"From him descended most of the kingly races in the north part of the world. He was king of the Tyrkia. He fled from the Romans to the north."

It then deduces, through two lines of descendants from him, by two other sons than those who head the Anglo-Saxon dynasties, the Kings of Norway and Denmark.

The Norway line is,	The Danish line is,
Oden	Oden
Niordr in Noatunum, which was near Sigtun	Skioldr
Yngui Fræyr	Fridleifr
Fiolner	Fridfrode
Svegdir	Fridleifr
Vallande	Havarr-Handrami, or strong hand
Visburr	Frode
Domalldr	Varmundr Vitri, or the wise
Domarr	Olafr Litillate, or the mild
Dyggvi	Danr Mikillate, or the proud
Dagr	Frode Fridsami, or the quiet
Agni, the husband of Skialfa	Fridleifr
Alrekr	Frode Fraekne
Yngui	Ingialdr, the foster of Starkadar
Jorundr	Halfdan, his brother
Aun, the aged	Helgi and Hroar
Egill, Slayer of Tunna	Rolfr Kraki
Ottarr Vendilkraka	Hrærekr
Athils of Upsal	Frode
Eysteinn	Halfdan
Yugwarr	Hrærekr Slaungvan baugi
Braut-Onundr	Haralldr Hilldítaunn
Ingialldr, the cunning	Sigurdr Hring, son of Randver
Olafr Tre-telgia, or the wood-cutter	RAGNAR LODBROG
Haldan Hvit-bein, or white feet	Sigurdr Orm
Eysteinn	Haurda Knutr.
Halfdan, the meek	
Gudrodr, the magnanimous	
Halfdar Svarti, or the black	
HARALLD HARFAGRI.	

Langbek Scrip. Dan. 1. p. 1—6.

This Icelandic document inserts twenty-nine kings between Oden and Harald Harfagre, who acceded in 873. But twenty

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

of these sovereigns perished violently, and therefore thirty years would be too large an average for every one. If we allow twenty years each for those who died by violence, and thirty for the other nine, this would station Oden about 203 years after the Christian æra.

The same northern authority puts twenty-three kings between Oden and Ragnar Lodbrog, who acceded about 812. As in these turbulent parts few Baltic kings died naturally, we cannot take a higher average for all than twenty-five years; and this computation would place Oden about 237 years after Christ.

Therefore, on the whole, we may consider Woden, or Odin, to have really lived and reigned in the north, and may place his real chronology as not earlier than 200, nor later than 300 years of the Christian æra.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Ancient BRITISH *Accounts of the Battles with the* WEST SAXONS, *and the authentic History of* ARTHUR.

CHAP. III.

530. Battle of Llongborth.

SOME of the battles mentioned by the ancient Welsh poets are those between Cerdic and the Britons; one of these is the battle at Llongborth. In this conflict Arthur was the commander in chief[1]; and Geraint ab Erbin was a prince of Devonshire, united with him against the Saxons. Llywarch Hen, in his elegy on his friend, describes the progress of the battle. The shout of onset, and the fearful obscurity which followed the shock, are succeeded by the terrible incidents which alarm humanity into abhorrence of war. The edges of the blades in contact, the gushing of blood, the weapons of the heroes with gore fast dropping, men surrounded with terror, the crimson gash upon the chieftain's brow, biers with the dead and reddened men, a tumultuous running together, the combatants striving in blood to the knees, and ravens feasting on human[2] prey, compose the dismal picture which this ancient bard has transmitted to us of a battle in which he was personally engaged.

THE valiant Geraint was slain; "slaughtering his foes he fell."[3] The issue of the conflict is not

[1] Llywarch Hen's Elegies, p. 9. [2] Ib. p. 3—7.

[3] Llywarch Hen's Elegies, p. 7. The 20th triad names him as one of the Llynghessawg, the naval commanders of Britain. The Welsh genealogies make him the son of Constantine of Cornwall, from Gwen, the daughter of Gyngar. They give him a son named Seliff. Bodedd y Saint, Welsh Arch. vol. ii. p. 33.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 530.

precisely stated, but some ambiguous expressions concur, with the absence of all triumphant language, to indicate that the Britons did not prevail. As Llongborth literally implies the haven of ships, and was some harbour on the southern coast, we may consider this poem as describing the conflict at Portsmouth when Porta landed. The Saxon Chronicle says, that a very noble British youth fell on that occasion [4], but does not mention his name.

Battle on the Llawen.

LLYWARCH mentions another battle on the Llawen, in which Arthur was engaged. Gwen, the poet's favourite son, exerted himself in the struggle. The battle was at the ford of Morlas. The bard describes his son as watching the preceding night, with his shield on his shoulder. He compares his impetuosity to the assault of the eagle; and laments him as the bravest of his children. "As he was my son, he did not retreat." Of the event of the battle, he only says, that Arthur did not recede. [5]

OF the other contests which ensued before Wessex was colonised by Saxons, we have no further information from the British writers, except of the battle at Bath.

Battle. of Bath.

GILDAS intimates, that, until the battle of Bath, the Saxons and the Britons alternately conquered; and that this was almost the last, but not the least slaughter of the invaders. Nennius makes it the twelfth of Arthur's battles. [6] The position of this battle has been disputed, but it seems to have oc-

[4] Sax. Chron. 17. Fl. Wig. 206.
[5] Llywarch Hen's Elegy on Old Age, p. 131—135.
[6] Gildas, s. 26. Nennius, s. 23.

Digitized by Google

curred near Bath.[7] Its chronology is not clear.[8] The Welsh MSS. in the red book of Hergest, says, that 128 years intervened from the age of Gwrtheyrn to the battle of Badon, in which Arthur and the elders conquered the Saxons.[9] CHAP. III. 590.

ARTHUR was the British chieftain who so long resisted the progress of Cerdic. The unparalleled celebrity which this Briton has attained, in his own country and elsewhere, both in history and romance, might be allowed to exalt our estimation of the Saxon chief, who maintained his invasion, though an Arthur opposed him, if the British hero had not himself been unduly magnified into an incredible and inconsistent conqueror.

THE authentic actions of Arthur have been so disfigured by the additions of the minstrels, and of Jeffry, that many writers have denied that he ever lived[10]: but this is an extreme, as objectionable as The probable history of Arthur.

[7] Mr. Carte describes the Mount of Badon, in Berkshire, p. 205. Usher places the battle at Bath, p. 477. Camden also thinks that Badon Hill is the Bannesdowne, or that which overhangs the little village Bathstone, and exhibits still its bulwarks and a rampire. Gibson, ed. p. 470.

[8] Gildas, in a passage of difficult construction, says, as we interpret, that it took place forty four years before he wrote,—annum obsessionis Badonici montis, qui que quadragessimus quartus ut novi oritur annus, mense jam primo emenso qui jam et meæ nativitatis est, s. 26.—Bede construed it to mean the forty-fourth year after the Saxon invasion, lib. i. c. 16., but the words of Gildas do not support him. Matt. West. p. 186., places it in 520. Langhorn, p. 62., prefers 511.

[9] See this published in the Cambrian Register, p. 313. Pryse, in his Defensio, p. 120., quotes a passage of Taliesen on this battle, which I have not observed among his printed poems.

[10] His existence was doubted very early. Genebrard said, it might be inferred from Bede, Arcturum magnum nunquam extitisse. Chron. lib. iii. ap. Usher, 522.—Sigebert, who wrote in the twelfth century, complained that, except in the then newly-published British history, nullam de eo mentionem invenimus. 1 Pistori Rer. German. 504.—Our Milton is also sceptical about him. Many others are as unfriendly to his fame.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 530.

the romances which occasioned it. The tales that all human perfection was collected in Arthur[11]; that giants and kings who never existed, and nations which he never saw, were subdued by him; that he went to Jerusalem for the sacred cross[12]; or that he not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future[13], we may, if we please, recollect only to despise; but when all such fictions are removed, and those incidents only are retained which the sober criticism of history sanctions with its approbation, a fame ample enough to interest the judicious, and to perpetuate his honourable memory, will still continue to claim our belief and applause.

THE most authentic circumstances concerning Arthur, appear to be these:

His birth.

HE was a chieftain in some part of Britain near its southern coasts. As a Mouric, king of Glamorganshire, had a son named Arthur at this period[14], and many of Arthur's actions are placed about that

[11] And, in short, God has not made, since Adam was, the man more perfect than Arthur. Brut. G. ab Arthur. 2 W. Archaeiol. p. 299.

[12] Nennius, or his interpolator, Samuel, pledges himself that the fragments of the cross brought by Arthur were kept in Wedale, six miles from Mailross. 3 Gale, p. 114. — Langhorn, whose neat Latin Chronicle of the Saxon kingdoms I wish to praise for its general precision, adduces Jerom and others to prove that Britons used to visit Jerusalem, p. 47.

[13] Joseph of Exeter, in his Elegant Antiocheis, after contrasting the inferior achievements of Alexander, Cæsar, and Hercules, with those of his flos regum Arthurus, adds,

> Sed nec pinetum coryli, nec sidera solem
> Æquant; annales Latios, Graiosque revolve;
> Prisca parem nescit, æqualem postera nullum
> Exhibitura dies. Reges supereminet omnes
> Solus; præteritis melior, *majorque futuris*.
>
> Ap. Usher, p. 519.

[14] Reg. Llandav.

Digitized by Google

district, it has been thought probable that the celebrated Arthur was the son of Mouric: but this seems to have been too petty a personage, and too obscure for his greater namesake, who is represented by all the traditions and history that exist concerning him to have been the son of Uthur. CHAP. III. 530.

He is represented in the Lives of the Welsh Saints, with incidents that suit the real manners of the age. Meeting a prince in Glamorganshire, who was flying from his enemies, Arthur was, at first, desirous of taking by force the wife of the fugitive. His military friends, Cei and Bedguir, persuaded him to refrain from the injustice; and to assist the prince to regain his lands.[15] His actions.

A British chief having killed some of his warriors, Arthur pursues him with all the avidity of revenge. At the request of St. Cadoc, Arthur submits his complaint to the chiefs and clergy of Britain, who award Arthur a compensation.[16]

At another time, Arthur is stated to have plundered St. Paternus, and to have destroyed a monastery in Wales.[17] These incidents suit the short character which Nennius gives of him, that he was cruel from his childhood.[18]

It is stated, by Caradoc of Llancarvan, that Melva, the king of Somersetshire, carried off Arthur's wife, by force, to Glastonbury. Arthur, with his friends, whom he collected from Cornwall and Devonshire, assaulted the ravisher. The ecclesiastics interposed, and persuaded Melva to return her peaceably. Arthur received her, and

[15] Vita S. Cadoci, Cott. MSS. Vesp. A. 14. [16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid. Vita S. Paterni MS. Cei is mentioned as his companion in a poem of Taliesin's.
[18] Nenn. c. 62.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

both the kings rewarded the monks for their useful interference.[19]

530. ARTHUR also maintained a war against the Britons, in the north of the island; and killed Huel their king. He was greatly rejoiced at this success; because, says Caradoc, he had killed his most powerful enemy.[20] Thus Arthur, by his wars, with his own countrymen, as much assisted the progress of the Saxons, as he afterwards endeavoured to check it, by his struggles with Cerdic.

HE may have fought the twelve battles mentioned by Nennius[21]; but it is obvious, from the preceding paragraphs, that they were not all directed against the Anglo-Saxons. He is represented by Nennius, as fighting them in conjunction with the kings of the Britons. It is clear from many authorities, that there were several kings at this time in different parts of Britain.[22] But there appears, as the preceding pages have intimated, to have been a paramount sovereign; a Pen-dragon, or Penteyrn; who, in nominal dignity at least, was superior to every

[19] Carad. Vit. Gild. MSS. King's Lib. Malmsbury mentions, in his History of Glastonbury, p. 307., one circumstance of Arthur sending Ider, the sun of King Nuth, on an adventure, after having knighted him; but it is too romantically narrated to be classed among the authentic facts. Giants have no right to admission into ordinary history.

[20] Carad.

[21] Nenn. c. 62, 63. He thus enumerates them:—1st, at the mouth of the river called Glen; 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th, on another river called Douglas, in the region of Linius; 6th, on the river called Bassas; the 7th, in the wood of Caledon; the 8th, in Castle Gunnion, where he adds that Arthur had the image of the cross and of Mary on his shoulders; the 9th, at Caerlon; the 10th, on the banks of the Rebroit; the 11th, on the mount called Agned Cathregonion; the 12th, on the Badon Hills.

[22] The Cott. MSS. Vesp. A. 14., in the Lives of the Welsh Saints, mention several in Wales.

Digitized by Google

other. Arthur is exhibited in this character[23]; and his father Uthur had the same appellation.[24]

Four of the battles, ascribed to him by Nennius, have been ably illustrated by Mr. Whittaker.[25] Mr. Camden and others had remarked, that the Douglas, on which Nennius had placed them, was a river in Lancashire. The historian of Manchester, whom I am happy to praise for his genius and energy, has commented on the positions of these conflicts with great local knowledge. His fancy, though often too prolific, and even on this portion of our history peculiarly active, yet describes these with so much probability, that we may adopt his sketches as history.

The battle of Badon Hills, or near Bath, has been celebrated as Arthur's greatest and most useful achievement; a long interval of repose to the Britons has been announced as its consequence[26]; yet it is curious to remark, that this victory only checked the progress of Cerdic; and does not appear to have produced any further success. We hear not of the vindictive pursuit of Arthur, of the invasion of Hampshire, or the danger of Cerdic. The Saxon was penetrating onwards even towards Wales or Mercia; he was defeated, and did not advance.[27] No other conflicts ensued. Arthur was content to repulse. This must have been

[23] Trioedd 7. p. 3.

[24] There is an elegy on Uthyr's death among the ancient British bards. See Welsh Arch. vol. i.

[25] Hist. Manch. vol. ii. p. 43—45. 4to. ed.

[26] This seems to be the battle mentioned by Gildas and Bede, which occurred when Gildas was forty-four years old.

[27] Bede's expressions, taken from Gildas, express the general truth of these conflicts. "Now the natives, now their enemies conquered, until the siege of the Hills of Bath, when they (the Britons) did not give the least slaughter to their enemies," c. 16. p. 53.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

530.

because he wanted power to pursue. Arthur was, therefore, not the warrior of irresistible strength; he permitted Cerdic to retain his settlements in Wessex; and such an acquiescence accords with the Chronicle, which asserts, that after many fierce conflicts, he conceded to the Saxon the counties of Southampton and Somerset.[28] The latter was however still contested.

How mentioned in the Welsh bards.

THIS state of moderate greatness suits the character in which the Welsh bards exhibit Arthur. They commemorate him; but it is not with that excelling glory with which he has been surrounded by subsequent traditions. On the contrary, Urien of Reged seems to have employed the harp more than Arthur. Llywarch the aged, who lived through the whole period of slaughter, and had been one of the guests and counsellors of Arthur[29], never displays him in transcendent majesty. In the battle of Llongborth, which Arthur directed, it was the valour of Geraint that arrested the bard's notice; and his elegy, though long, scarcely mentions the commander, whose merit, in the frenzy of later fables, clouds every other. As an effusion of real feeling, this poem may be supposed to possess less of flattery and more of truth in its panegyric. It speaks of Arthur with respect, but not with wonder. Arthur is simply mentioned as the commander and the conductor of the toil of war; but

[28] Rad. quoted by Polychronica, says, in quibusdam chronicis legitur, quod tandem Arthurus extædiatus, post 26 annum adventus Cerdici fidelitate sibi jurata dedit ei Hamptershiram et Somersetham, p. 224.—The Chronicle of Ricardi Divisionensis, in MSS. at Cambridge affirms the same. It is quoted by Langhorn. Chron. Rer. Anglorum, p. 70.

[29] Trioedd 116. p. 74.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

530.

Geraint is profusely celebrated with dignified periphrasis.[30]

In the same manner Arthur appears in the Afallenau of Myrddin; and in Taliesin he is mentioned as a character well known and reverenced[31], but not idolised; yet he was then dead, and all the actions of his patriotism and valour had been performed. Not a single epithet is added, from which we can discern him to have been that whirlwind of war which swept away in its course all the skill and armies of Europe. That he was a courageous warrior is unquestionable; but that he was the miraculous Mars of the British history, from whom kings and nations sunk in panic, is completely disproved by the temperate encomiums of his contemporary bards.

One fact is sufficient to refute all the hyperboles of Jeffry, whose work has made him so extravagantly great. Though Arthur lived and fought, yet the Anglo-Saxons were not driven from the island, but gradually advanced their conquest, with progressive dominion, whether he was alive or whether he was dead. Reflecting on this unquestionable fact, we may hesitate to believe that Arthur was victorious in all his battles[32], because, if he wielded the whole force of Britain, and only fought

[30] As "the glory of Britain — the terrifier of the foe — the molester of the enemy — the great son of Erbin — the strenuous warrior of Dyvnaint." Llywarch, p. 3—7.

[31] Myrddin styles him modur tyrfa, king of a multitude. Afall. 1. W. A. 153.

[32] Nennius, c. 62., says, this, "in omnibus bellis victor extitit." But the author quoted by Higden, p. 224., says more probably of Cerdic, who often fought with Arthur, "si semel vinceretur, alia vice acrior surrexit ad pugnam." — Gildas, s. 26., implies an alternation of victory previous to the battle of Bath. — The MS. Chron. Divis. cited by Langhorn, 70., affirms it.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 530.

to conquer, what rescued Cerdic, Ella, the son of Hengist, and the invaders of Essex and East-Anglia from absolute destruction?

THE Welsh triads notice many of Arthur's friends and warriors; and mention one stanza as his composition. But this must be mere tradition.

Sef ynt fy nhri chadfarchawg,
Mael hir, a Llyr Lluyddawg;
A cholofn Cymru Caradawg.[33]

To me there are three heroes in battle;
Mael the tall, and Llyr with his army,
And Caradawg the pillar of the Cymry.

His death.

ARTHUR perished at last ingloriously, in a civil feud with Medrawd his nephew, who is said to have engrossed the affections of Gwenhyfar, his wife. But as the blow of Arthur on Medrawd is mentioned as one of the most mischievous blows in Britain[34], this may have been the immediate cause of Medrawd's hostility.

THE character of Medrawd has been branded with much reproach by the Welsh, because their favourite Arthur perished in the war which he excited. But there is a triad, which records his gentleness, good nature, and engaging conversation; and declares that it was difficult to deny him any request.[35] He must have been powerfully supported, to have raised an army capable of confronting Arthur in the field. Maelgwn, who reigned in Gwynedd, seems to have been one of Medrawd's allies; for Gildas inculpates him for having destroyed the king his uncle, with his bravest soldiers.[36]

[33] Trioedd 29. p. 62.
[34] Trioedd 51. p. 13.
[35] Trioedd 83. p. 18.
[36] Gildas, p. 12.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

THE conflict took place at Camlan, where both Arthur and Medrawd fell[37]: Arthur, mortally wounded, was carried out of the field. From the coast of Cornwall he was conveyed into Somersetshire. Sailing along the shore they reached the Uzella, which they ascended, and the king was committed to the care of his friends in Glastonbury[38], but their skill could not avert the fatal hour. 542.

His death concealed.

THE death of Arthur was long concealed, and a wild tale was diffused among the populace, that he had withdrawn from the world into some magical region; from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and to lead the Cymry in triumph through the island. Why this fiction was invented, we may now in vain inquire. It could not repress the ambition of the Saxons, because the temporary absence of Arthur was sufficient to favour their wishes; and if his living authority could not prevent British insurrection, was it probable that his residence in another region would avail? Yet Taliesin industriously sang that Morgana promised, if he remained a long time with her, to heal his wounds; and it is notorious that the return of Arthur was a fond hope of the people for many ages. Perhaps it was an illusion devised to avert the popular vengeance from those who, by aiding Medrawd, had contributed to produce the lamented event[39]; or perhaps some,

[37] This battle is placed in 542, by the Annals in Wharton's Anglia Sacra, vol. ii. p. 648.; by many authors cited by Usher, Ant. p. 521.; and by Jeffry and the Welch Brut ab Arthur.

[38] See Jeffry's curious poem, his best work, MSS. Cott. Lib. Vesp. E. 4. See also Giraldus Spec. Eccles. dist. ii. c. 9. cited apud Usher, p. 523.

[39] Matth. Westm., p. 192., declares that the king voluntarily concealed himself while dying, that his enemies might not triumph, nor his friends be molested.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

542.

affecting to reign in trust for Arthur, conciliated the public prejudice in favour of their government, by thus representing that they governed only for him.

His family.

Of the family of Arthur we know little. We hear of Noe in Caermarthenshire, reputed to be his son; another son, Llechau, is celebrated as an accomplished warrior.[40] His sister Anna married Llew, brother of the famous Urien, and son of Cynvarch; Medrawd was her son.[41] The marriage of Anna united the kings of the northern Britons in consanguinity with Arthur.

His remains discovered in 1189.

But though the friends of Arthur concealed the place of his interment, a future age discovered it. In the year 1189, when romance had begun to magnify his fame, his body was diligently sought for in the abbey of Glastonbury. The circumstances attending this search give us the first clear and historical certainty about this celebrated man, and are therefore worth detailing. They have been transmitted to us by Giraldus Cambrensis, who saw both the bones and the inscription, as well as by a monk of the abbey; and the same facts are alluded to by William of Malmsbury, a contemporary, and by others.

The substance of the account of Giraldus is this.[42] Henry the Second, who twice visited Wales, had heard from an ancient British bard, that Arthur was interred at Glastonbury, and that

[40] MSS. Vesp. A. 14. p. 57. Trioedd 10. p. 3.

[41] See the genealogy in Mr. Owen's Life of Llywarch.

[42] This account of Giraldus corresponds with that of the monk of Glastonbury, which Leland has extracted in his Assert. Art. p. 50.; and Usher in his Antiq. p. 117. Malmsbury more briefly alludes to it, De Ant. Glast.

Digitized by Google

some pyramids marked the place. The king communicated this to the abbot and monks of the monastery, with the additional information, that the body had been buried very deep to keep it from the Saxons; and that it would be found not in a stone tomb, but in a hollowed oak. There were two pyramids or pillars at that time standing in the cemetery of the abbey. They dug between these till they came to a leaden cross lying under a stone, which had this inscription, and which Giraldus says he saw and handled — "Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avallonia."[43] — Below this, at the depth of sixteen feet from the surface, a coffin of hollowed oak was found containing bones of an unusual size. The leg-bone was three fingers (probably in their breadth) longer than that of the tallest man then present. This man was pointed out to Giraldus. The skull was large, and showed the marks of ten wounds. Nine of these had concreted into the bony mass, but one had a cleft in it, and the opening still remained; apparently the mortal blow.[44]

GIRALDUS says, in another place, that the bones of one of Arthur's wives were found there with his, but distinct, at the lower end. Her yellow hair lay apparently perfect in substance and co-

[43] A fac-simile of this inscription is given in Gibson's Camden, p. 66.; and in Whitaker's Manchester, part ii. Dr. Whitaker was told that the cross had then lately been in the possession of Mr. Chancellor Hughes, at Wells. The form of the letters suits the age of Arthur.

[44] Matthew Paris notices the discovery of the bones, but says that it was occasioned by their digging the grave of a monk, who had an earnest desire to be buried in that spot. It is not improbable that this may have been a further inducement with the convent to have the spot dug.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 542.

lour, but on a monk's eagerly grasping and raising it up, it fell to dust.[45]

THE bones were removed into the great church at Glastonbury, and deposited in a magnificent shrine, which was afterwards placed, in obedience to the order of Edward I., before the high altar. He visited Glastonbury with his queen, in 1276, and had the shrine of Arthur opened to contemplate his remains. They were both so interested by the sight, that the king folded the bones of Arthur in a rich shroud, and the queen those of his wife; and replaced them reverentially in their tomb.[46]

THE circumstances of Arthur's funeral could be known only from Welsh traditions. Giraldus has left us one of these: "Morgan, a noble lady, proprietor of this district, and patroness of the Abbey, and related to Arthur, had the king carried, after the battle of Camlan, to the island called Glastonbury to heal his wounds."[47] The same facts are alluded to by Jeffry, in his elegant poem, which entitles him to more literary respect than his history, and which contains more of real British traditions.[48]

THE pyramids or obelisks that are stated to have marked the place of Arthur's interment, long remained at Glastonbury. They had images and inscriptions, which have not yet been understood,

[45] Girald. Institutio Principis. ap. Lel. 47. This work still remains in MSS. in the British Museum.

[46] Mon. Glast. Lel. 55.

[47] Gir. in Speculo Ecclesiastico, MSS. Brit. Mus.; and ap. Lel. 44.

[48] It is still in MSS. in the British Museum. Since it was noticed in this work, Mr. Ellis has given an account of it, with extracts, in his History of the Early English Romances.

Digitized by Google

but which do not seem to relate to Arthur.[49] A sword, fancied to have been his caliburno, was presented by Richard the First, as a valuable gift, to the king of Sicily.[50]

These are the only circumstances which we can present to the reader as Arthur's authentic history. The romances about him contain several names of real persons, and seem occasionally to allude to a few real facts. But their great substance and main story are so completely fabulous, that whatever part of them was once true, is overwhelmed and lost in their fictions and manifest falsifications both of manners and history.

[49] On one of the sides of the pyramid that was twenty-six feet high, with five sides, was a figure in a pontifical dress: on the second side was a royal personage, with the letters Her, Sexi, Blisyer: on the third, Wemerest, Bantomp, Winewegn: the other sides had also inscriptions. The smaller pyramid was eighteen feet high, and had four sides with inscriptions. W. Malms. de Antiq. Glast. Gale, iii. p. 306., as collated in my copy by Hearne.

[50] Usher, p. 121.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

Establishment of the ANGLO-SAXONS *in* EAST ANGLIA, MERCIA, *and* ESSEX. — *Arrival of* IDA *in* NORTHUMBERLAND. — *Battles with the* BRITONS. — *Kingdoms of* BERNICIA *and* DEIRA.

BOOK III.

WHILE Cerdic and his son were conflicting with Arthur, and the other British kings and chiefs who opposed them in Hampshire and the adjoining regions, several adventurers from the nation of the Angles in Sleswick, arrived on the eastern coast of the island. The chronology of their invasions cannot be more definitely stated than by the date which an old chronicler has affixed to them, and which accords so well with the other facts on this subject, that it may be considered as entitled to our attention. Another more ancient has mentioned that many petty chiefs arrived in East Anglia and Mercia in the reign of Cerdic, and fought many battles with the natives; but as they formed no kingdom and were numerous, their names had not been preserved.[1] The year in which these invasions began to occur is placed by the other annalist in 527.[2]

First arrivals in East Anglia. 527.

CONTEMPORARY with these assailants, a body of Saxons planted themselves in Essex, and protected on the south by the kingdom of the Jutes in Kent, and on the north by the adventurers in East Anglia, they succeeded in founding a little kingdom, about 530[3], which has little else to attract our notice,

Kingdom of Essex founded. 530.

[1] H. Huntingd. p. 313. [2] Matt. Westm. p. 188.
[3] The first king was Erkenwin, who died 587. Matt. Westm. p. 200.

Digitized by Google

than that it gradually stretched itself into Middlesex, and obtained the command of London, then but a flourishing town of trade, though destined in a subsequent age to become the metropolis of all the Jute, Saxon, and Angli kingdoms of the island. 530.

In this state of the contest between the British nation and their Saxon invaders, while the Britons, yet masters of all the island, from the Avon to the Cornish promontory on the west, and to the Firth of Forth on the north, were resisting and arresting the progress of the son of Cerdic on the one hand, and the unrecorded adventurers in Norfolk and Suffolk on the other, the most formidable invasion occurred on the coast above the Humber, which the natives had yet been called upon to oppose. In 547, Ida led to the region between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth, or accompanied, a fleet of forty vessels of warriors, all of the nation of the Angles.[4] Twelve sons were with him.[5] The chieftains associated with him, or who afterwards joined in his enterprise, appointed him their king.[6] Ida, like Hengist, Cerdic, and Ella, traced his pedigree to Woden, the great ancestor of the Anglo-Saxon chieftains, as well as those of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

Ida arrives in Bernicia. 547.

That part of Britain between the Humber and the Clyde was occupied by Britons; but they

[4] Flor. Wig. "In provincia Berniciorum," p. 218. So Nennius calls him the first king of Bernicia, p. 114.

[5] We may record their names as specimens of their family appellations: Adda, Belric, Theodric, Ethelric, Theodhere, Osmer from his queens, and Occa, Ailric, Ecca, Oswold, Sogor, and Sogether. Most of these are significant words, or combinations of words, in the Saxon language.

[6] So Huntingdon states, p. 314.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

547. State of the North.

were divided into many states. The part nearest the Humber, was called Deifyr by the ancient natives, which, after the Saxon conquest, was named Deira; and north of Deifyr was Bryneich, which became Latinised into Bernicia. Deifyr and Bryneich had three sovereigns, whose names have descended to us: Gall, Dyvedel, and Ysgwnell.

In some part of the district between the Humber and the Clyde, was a state called Reged, which Urien, the patron of Taliesin, governed. In the parts nearest the Clyde, there were three other sovereigns, Rhydderc the Generous, Gwallog the son of Lleenog, and Morgant. Llywarch Hen also enjoyed a little principality in Argoed. Aneurin, the bard, was the chief of a district, called Gododin. And Mynnyddawr ruled in a part near the firths at Eiddyn, which has been conjectured to be the origin of Edinburgh, or the burgh of Edin. Cunedda was also a wledig, or sovereign, in some of these Northern regions, who emigrated into North Wales; and Cau was another. All these, and some others, are mentioned in the Welsh remains; which prove that the north of Britain, like the south, was divided into many sovereignties; some of them of very inconsiderable size. This state of the country, at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion, must be always recollected, when the facility and permanency of the Saxon conquests are adverted to.[7] From the Kymry, or Britons, having retained possession of much of this country, for some time after the Saxon inva-

[7] See for these facts Nennius — Caradoc's Life of Gildas — The Welch Triads — Aneurin's Gododin — Taliesin's Poems — Cotton. MSS. Vesp. A. 14. — Llywarch Hen's Poems — Bodedd y Saint, 2 W. Arch.

Digitized by Google

sions, a large portion of it was called Cumbria; which is the Latin name by which their states or kingdoms in these parts have been usually expressed. As the Saxon conquests spread, the extent of British Cumbria was diminished, and the most noted of the British race, who had any Cumbrian kingdom in these parts, were the Ystrad-clywd, who maintained what has been called the Strat Clyde kingdom. The word, Y-strad-clyd, literally imports the valley of the Clyde; and the region they occupied was therefore about the Clyde. After enduring wars, with various fortune, with the Britons, the Dalriads, and the Piks, their little kingdom was destroyed in the close of the tenth century. Alclyde, which means the height of the Clyde, was the principal town of the Y-strad-clyde, and was in all likelihood the present Dunbarton. This circumstance increases the probability, that the Eiddyn, another town in these parts, which Mynnyddawr governed at this period, was the town on the Forth, almost parallel with Alclyde, and which has long become illustrious, under the name of Edinburgh. Another British state between the Y-strad-clyde, and the Saxons, seems to have existed so late as the tenth century; as Eugenius, or Owen, king of the Cumbri, is then mentioned.[8] 547.

The defence of the Britons, according to the poems which remain in the manuscripts of their ancient poets, appears to have been peculiarly vigorous in these districts: and their warriors have

[8] Mr. Pinkerton distinguishes the kingdom of Stratclyde from the kingdom of Cumbria, Inq. Hist. Scot. i. p. 60—99. But we must add to this opinion, the recollection that there were many British states at the time of Ida's invasion.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

received a liberal meed of praise, from the bards whom they patronised.

547. Urien of Reged.

Of these, Urien, the chief of Reged, has been most extolled. He was the son of Cynvarc the Aged.[9] Taliesin has addressed to him several poems with warm panegyric; and alludes to him in others. In these he calls him the head of the people; the shield of warriors; the most generous of men; bounteous as the sea; the thunderbolt of the Cymry. He compares his onset to the rushing of the waves; and to the fiery meteors moving across the heavens.[10] But though he notices him as engaged in many battles[11], he has only distinctly described the battle of Argoed Llwyfain, and the battle of Gwenystrad.

As Ida was the war-king, who led the Angles against the Britons in these parts, it was with his forces, that Urien and his sons and friends so fiercely combated. Ida is not named in the Welsh poetry; because they have chosen to stigmatise the invader by a reproachful epithet. They call him Flamddwyn[12] the flame-bearer, or destroyer; a term which implies the devastations that accompanied his progress. As the elegy of Llywarch Hen, on Urien, expresses that he conquered in the land of Bryneich, or Bernicia[13], we must in-

[9] Several triads mention him and his family, as also Llywarch Hen, and Taliesin.

[10] See the Yspeil Taliesin, p. 57. Canu Urien Reged, p. 55.; and his other poems addressed to Urien.

[11] As in his Canu i Urien, p. 57.

[12] Flamddwyn is also mentioned in the triads; but it is for a misfortune which some ladies will not permit either the brave or the good to escape. His wife, Bun, is classed among the British women who were notorious for unchastity. Trioedd, p. 56. It would seem from this tradition that he had married a British lady.

[13] Llywarch Hen, Welsh Arch. p. 104. Mr. Owen (now Dr.

Digitized by Google

fer, that he was frequently successful against Ida; and two of his most fortunate battles appear to be those which Taliesin has selected for his praise. CHAP. IV. 547.

THE bard states, that on a Saturday, the invaders, under "the destroyer," hastened with four divisions, to surround Goddeu and Reged, the seat of Urien's government. They spread from Argoed to Arfynnydd, and demanded submission and hostages. Battle of Argoed Llyvain.

OWEN, the son of Urien, and his friend Cenau, indignantly rejected the proposal. Urien then indulged their ardour. He exclaimed,

> Being assembled for our country,
> Let us elevate our banners above the mountains;
> And push forward our forces over the borders;
> And lift our spears above the warrior's heads;
> And rush upon the Destroyer in his army;
> And slay both him and his followers!

IMPRESSED with his patron's valour, Taliesin declares, that when he was declining with age, he should be unable to meet death with smiles, unless he was praising Urien. [14]

ANOTHER conflict with Ida was at the mound of Gwenystrad, literally, "the pleasant valley." The Britons of Cattraeth assembled round Urien, "the king of victorious battle." Taliesin, who was present in the struggle, thus describes it: — Battle of Gweny-strad.

> Neither the fields, nor the woods, gave safety to the foe,
> When the shout of the Britons came

Owen Pughe), published a translation of this ancient bard, which, though wanting some revisal, entitles him to the thanks of all the friends of British literature.

[14] Taliesin, p. 53.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

547.

Like a wave raging against the shore—
I saw the brave warriors in array;
And after the morning, how mangled!
I saw the tumult of the perishing hosts;
The blood springing forward and moistening the ground.
Gwenystrad was defended by a rampart:
Wearied, on the earth, no longer verdant,
I saw, at the pass of the ford,
The blood-stained men dropping their arms;
Pale with terror!—
I admired the brave chief of Reged;
I saw his reddened brow,
When he rushed on his enemies at Llec gwen Calystan:
Like the bird of rage was his sword on their bucklers:
It was wielded with deadly fate.

TALIESIN renews his wish not to die pleasantly, unless he was praising Urien. [15]

BESIDES the patriotic valour of Urien, which he lavishly praises with all the artifice, and sometimes with the exaggerations of poetry [16], Taliesin extols highly his liberality. This is the theme of several poems. [17]

[15] Taliesin, p. 52.

[16] One specimen may be added:

What noise is that? Does the earth shake?
Or is it the swelling sea that roars?
If there be a sigh in the dingle,
Is it not Urien who thrusts?
If there be a sigh on the mountains,
Is it not Urien who conquers?
If there be a sigh on the slope of the hills,
Is it not Urien who wounds?
If there be a sigh of dismay,
Is it not from the assault of Urien?
There is no refuge from him;
Nor will there be from famine,
To those who seek plunder near him!
His wrath is death!

Can. Urien, p. 56.

[17] See the Dadolwch Urien, which is translated in the Vindication of the ancient British Poems, now annexed to this work. See also the Songs to Urien in 1 Welsh Arch. p. 55.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

547. Urien killed.

URIEN was also commemorated by his bardic friend, Llywarch Hen, who has left an elegy upon him. After bravely resisting the Saxons, it was the misfortune of Urien to be involved in one of those civil contests which were at this period the disgrace and ruin of the Britons. As he was besieging one of the descendants and successors of Ida, in Holy Island, he was slain by Llovan Lawdeffro, or Llovan with the detested hand, an emissary of Morgant, one of the chiefs of the Northern Britons.[18] Llywarch's elegy celebrates the British king with much earnest sympathy, but in rude and warlike strains.[19]

[18] Nenn. Gen. p. 117. Trioedd 38. p. 9.

[19] Marwnad Lly. Hen. W. A. p. 103—107. As Llywarch Hen is one of the British bards of the sixth century, the genuineness of whose poems is strongly marked, I will translate some extracts from his Elegy on Urien of Reged. He begins with an abrupt address to his spear.

Let me rush forward, thou ashen piercer!
Fierce thine aspect in the conflict!
'Tis better to kill than to parley.

Let me rush forward, thou ashen piercer!
Bitter and sullen as the laugh of the sea
Was the bursting tumult of the battle,
Of Urien of Reged, the vehement and stubborn.

An eagle to his foe in his thrust, brave as generous.
In the angry warfare, certain of victory
Was Urien, ardent in his grasp.

I bear by my side a head;
The head of Urien!
The courteous leader of his army;
But on his white bosom the raven is feeding.

He was a shield to his country;
His course was a wheel in battle.
Better to me would be his life than his mead:
He was a city to old age;
The head, the noblest pillar of Britain.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

OWEN, one of the sons of Urien, was also distinguished for his brave resistance to the Angles

547. His son Owen.

I bear a head that supported me!
Is there any known but he welcomed?
Woe to my hand!
Where is he that feasted me?

I bear a head from the mountain
The lips foaming with blood.
Woe to Reged from this day!

My arm has not shrunk,
But my breast is greatly troubled.
My heart! is it not broken?
The head I bear supported me.

The slender white body will be interred to-day,
Under earth and stones.
Woe to my hand!
The father of Owen is slain.—

Eurddyl will be joyless to-night.
Since the leader of armies is no more,
In Aber Lleu Urien fell.—

Dissevered is my lord:
Yet from his manly youth
The warriors loved not his resentment.
Many chiefs has he consumed.

The fiery breath of Urien has ceas'd.
I am wretched.
There is commotion in every district,
In search of Llovan with the detested hand.

Silent is the gale,
But long wilt thou be heard.
Scarcely any deserve praise,
Since Urien is no more.

Many a dog for the hunt and ethereal hawk
Have been trained on this floor,
Before Erlleon was shaken into ruins.

This hearth! no shout of heroes now adheres to it:
More usual on its floor
Was the mead; and the inebriated warriors.

This hearth! will not nettles now cover it?
While its defender lived,
More frequent was the tread of the petitioner.

Digitized by Google

under Ida. Taliesin praises his liberality and valour; and says he chased his enemy, as a herd of wolves pursuing sheep.[20] In his song to the Winds, the bard records Owen's successful defence of the flocks and cattle of his province; and also mentions his battles at the ford of Alclud, and other places. The poet's imagery is wild and dismal, like his subject. He describes the swords whirled round the faces of the combatants, and the blood staining their temples. "There was joy," he exclaims, "that day to the ravens, when men clamoured with the frowning countenance of battle. But the shield of Owen never receded."[21] The elegy states, that by the sword of this warrior Flamddwyn perished.[22] Taliesin occasionally com-

The green sod will cover it now;
But when Owen and Elphin lived
Its cauldron seethed the prey.

This hearth! the mouldy fungus will hide it now.
More usual about its meals
Was the striking of the sword of the fierce warrior.

Thorns will now cover it.
More usual once was the mixture
Of Owen's friends in social harmony.

Ants will soon overrun it.
More frequent were the bright torches
And honest festivities.

Swine will henceforward dig the ground,
Where once the gladness of heroes
And the horn of the banquet went round:
It was the solace of the army and the path of melody.

[20] Marwnad Owain ap Urien Reged, Tal. 1 W. A. p. 59.

[21] Can y Gwynt, p. 38, 39.

[22] Marwnad Owain, p. 59. Both the Saxon Chronicles, Flor. Wig. p. 218., and Nennius, p. 116., mention Ida to have reigned only twelve years. Yet Huntingdon calls him at his accession "juvenem nobilissimum," p. 314. The comparison of these authorities places Ida's death in the flower of his manhood; and this gives a countenance to the Welsh bard's assertion, that he perished in his conflicts with Owen of Reged.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

memorates other British heroes; but as it would be useless to revive a catalogue of names, long since forgotten, they need not be enumerated here.

547.

Battle of Cattraeth.

THAT conflict between the Saxons and Britons, which occupies the largest space in the ancient British poetry, is the battle or destruction of Cattraeth. It forms the subject of the Gododin of Aneurin[23], a poem much alluded to and venerated by the poets of Wales, and which has procured for him, among them, the title of the king of the bards. He was a chieftain in the northern part of the island, in the sixth century; and perished at last from the blow of an axe, inflicted by one Eiddyn, who has been therefore classed as one of the three foul assassins of Britain.[24]

The Gododin of Aneurin.

As it contains no regular narration of incident, and no introductory annunciation of its subject, but consists chiefly of stanzas but little connected, on the feats and praises of the chieftains whom it commemorates; and as it records places and British heroes, whose names, however notorious in their day, are not preserved elsewhere, it is difficult to say to what precise event or locality it actually applies. That the warriors mentioned were the contemporaries of Aneurin is clear from its contents[25], but this is all that we can with certainty infer.

[23] It is the first poem printed in the Archaiology of Wales. I printed a translation of the first seventy-three lines, in the "Vindication of the ancient British Poems."

[24] "Tair anfad gyflafan ynys Prydain. Eiddyn mab Einygan a laddwys Aneurin Gwawdrydd mydeyrn beird." Triad 47. 2 Welsh Arch. p. 65., and see p. 9.

[25] Thus he says he saw what he describes:

"I saw the scene from the high land of Adoen.
I saw the men in complete order at dawn at Adoen.
And the head of Dyfnwal ravens were consuming."

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

It has been usually supposed to record a battle, between the collected Britons of the north, under Mynyddawr of Eiddyn, which has been assumed to be Edinburgh, and the Saxons of Ida, or his successor. The issue was calamitous to the Britons; for out of above 360, who wore the golden torques, the mark of their nobility, only three escaped, of whom the bard was one.[26] This unfortunate result is undeniably stated; and it is as manifestly imputed to the Britons having previously indulged in an excess of mead. 547.

A RECENT writer on Cambrian mythology, whose imagination has been as active as such an illusive subject could excite it to be, has strenuously urged, that the Gododin records the famous massacre of the British nobles by Hengist.[27] That it The new theory upon it.

Gweleis y dull o ben tir Adoen.
Gweleis y wyr tyll vawr gan u aur Adoen.
Aphen Dyvynaul vrych brein ae cnoyn.
God. W. A. p. 13.

[26] A stanza of the Gododin thus states the result:

"The warriors went to Cattraeth. They were famous.
Wine and mead, from gold, had been their liquors—
Three heroes, and three score, and three hundred,
With the golden torques.
Of those who hastened after the jovial excess,
There escaped only three from the power of the swords,
The two war-dogs, Aeron and Cynon Dayarawd,
And I from the flowing blood,
The reward of my blessed muse."
Godod. p. 4.

[27] See Mythology and Rites of the British Druids, p. 318—384. Of its author, the Rev. Edward Davies, I wish to speak with more than mere respect, because his remarks on the ancient Welsh literature, in this work and in his Celtic researches, though displaying the same creative imagination, which pervades and injures Mr. Whittaker's historical investigations, have yet in many parts thrown great light on the

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

547.

neither mentions Hengist nor Gwrtheyrn, has not appeared to him to be an objection.[28] He supports his opinion by an unusually free translation, and by a sanguine commentary.

This translation contains so much fancy, and is in parts so forcibly adapted to the conjecture, and the whole is removed so much from the plain literal sense, that it seems most reasonable to dismiss the new hypothesis, as the illusion of a warm imagination. If the poem has any relation to the incident, which has become the subject of the tradition alluded to, that incident cannot be attached to Hengist, and did not occur in the manner hinted by Nennius, and detailed by Jeffry.[29]

The prevailing subject of the poem, continually repeated in every second or third stanza, is the intoxication of the Britons, from some great feast of mead previous to the battle.[30] So far the poem

venerable remains of the British bards, and contributed to gain for them more attention than they have been accustomed to receive.

[28] Mr. Davies thinks that he traces various allusions to them and to Ambrosius; but the same latitude of construction in this respect would almost make any poem mean any thing.

[29] The difference of opinion between Mr. Davies and all former readers of the Gododin, cannot be better stated than in his own words: "I also perceived, that the great catastrophe which the bard deplores, *was not*, as it has been generally represented, the fall of 360 nobles in the field of battle, to which they had rushed forth in a state of intoxication; *but*, the massacre of 360 unarmed British nobles, in time of peace, and at a feast, where they had been arranged promiscuously with armed Saxons," p. 321. On this I will only remark, that the former opinion is the manifest literal import of the poet's words. The new conjecture requires the ingenious author's commentary, as well as an adapted translation to make it at all probable.

[30] They went to Cattraeth:

> Loquacious were their hosts.
> Pale mead had been their feast, and was their poison.
>
> God. p. 2.

Digitized by Google

and the tradition correspond; and all the British nobles perished but three, another coincidence. But as Aneurin, according to the unvarying statement of the Welsh literature, lived in the early part of the sixth[31] century, and was contemporary with Taliesin, who mentions him[32]; and as the bard was himself one of the survivors of the conflict, and a captive from it[33], it cannot have occurred till some time after Hengist had died.[34] To this decisive

Its want of foundation.

So many other passages:

Gwyr a aeth Gattraeth vedvaeth vedwn. Ibid.
Med yvynt melyn melys maglawr. Ibid.

Cyt yven vedd gloew wrth liw babir,
Cyt vei da ei vlas y gas bu hir. Ibid.

So the bard says he partook of the wine and mead there:

Yveis y win a med y Mordai. God. p. 4.

[31] So Mr. Davies acknowledges, p. 317.; and adds, "Edward Llwyd refers the æra of the Gododin to the year 510, and this probably upon the authority of the ancient MS. which he quotes in the same passage," p. 321.

[32] In his Anrec Urien, p. 51. In like manner Aneurin speaks of Taliesin:

I Aneurin will do
What is known to Taliesin,
The partaker of my mind. God. p. 7.

[33] Aneurin thus mentions his captivity:

In the earthy abode,
With the iron chain
About the top of my two knees;
From the mead,
From the festive horns,
From the host at Cattraeth. God. p. 7.

[34] Mr. Davies escapes the difficulties of chronology by three large suppositions. First, he supposes, that though Hengist came in 449, yet that the reputed massacre did not occur till 472. But though Hengist was then alive, the Saxon Chronicle states, that he obtained

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 547.

evidence, from its chronology, may be added a remark, that although to the praise of his several heroes, or of their exploits, he annexes, almost invariably, a lamentation of their festive indulgence; yet this is not accompanied with any specific charge of treachery on the part of the Saxons.[35] If it related to the reported massacre, the natural process of the poet's mind would have been to have inveighed against the Saxons for their perfidy; instead of so continuously censuring the Britons for their inebriety. If Hengist had invited them to a banquet of peace and friendship, it was not merely natural, but it was even laudable, according to the customs of that age, that the festivity should advance to intoxication. As it is not likely that the bards ever witnessed a public banquet without

his kingdom after a battle in 455; and that in 457, after another battle, the Britons abandoned Kent. Another battle, in which twelve British leaders fell, occurred in 465. After such transactions as these, such a confiding banquet was not likely to have occurred on the part of the Britons, nor was such a massacre wanted to give Hengist that kingdom, which he had both acquired and maintained. His second and third will best speak for themselves: "There is no improbability in Aneurin's having attended the feast, as a young bard, in 472, and his having bewailed the friends of his youth, *thirty-eight* years *afterwards*, when he had fallen into the hands of the foe, and was confined in a dreary dungeon," p. 322. Yet according to Aneurin's own expressions in the proceding note, the captivity seems to me to be clearly referred to the destruction at Cattraeth. His words are:

Yn y ty deyerin
Catuyn heyernin
Am benn vy deulin
O ved o vuelin
O Gattraeth wnin.

Then follows the passage, in note 32., on himself and Taliesin.

[35] Mr. Davies believes he discerns such charges. But the supposed allusions are not direct, and do not seem to me to be the natural construction of the passages so applied.

Digitized by Google

this termination, it could not justly form, nor would have been made a subject of inculpation.

547.

That the Gododin should commemorate so many British chiefs, Ceawg[36], Cynon, Madawg, Tulvwlch, Mynnydawg, Cyvwlch, Caradawg, Owen, Eidiol, Pereddur, and Aeddan; and yet not actually name either Gwrthyrn, Guortemir, or Ambrosius, cannot but strengthen the inference, that it has no concern with the latter; for why should some be mentioned directly and plainly, and others, the most important in rank and power, be never named, but implied, as he thinks, by some periphrasis?

The locality of the incident, alluded to in the poem, seems also, as far as it can be ascertained, to be inconsistent with the massacre imputed to Hengist. It fixes the scene at Cattraeth, and it implies that the people of Deira and Bernicia were in the conflict.[37] Cattraeth has been always placed in the northern districts. So has Eiddyn, from which Mynnydawg came, whose courteousness is repeatedly praised in the poem, and whom in its natural construction it mentions as the commander of the British force. His host is also mentioned in the conflict, not as if he was feasting with a small

[36] This hero, whose name begins four of the stanzas of the poem, and whose praise seems to be their import, has been converted by Mr. Davies, contrary to all former translations, into an epithet. But by the same mode of interpretation, when we meet with the names Hengist, Cicero, and Naso, we may, if we please, turn our Saxon ancestor into a war-horse; the Roman orator into a bean; and the poet of the metamorphoses into a nose.

[37] Of the men of Dewyr and Bryneich:
The dreadful ones!
Twenty hundred perished in an hour.

O wyr Dewyr a Bryneich dychrawr
Ugeincant eu divant yn un awr. God. p. 2.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

547.

retinue, but as his warlike tribe[38]; and it is correspondent with this view that the Triads mention his host at the battle of Cattraeth, as one of the three gallant hosts of Britain, because they followed their chiefs at their own charge.[39]

THE natural import of the poem is, that the Britons had fought hastily on one of their festive days. And this leads us to infer, that they might have been surprised by an unexpected advance of the Saxon forces. That 360 nobles, intoxicated at a previous banquet, should have perished in this battle, and that 360 should be the number said to have been massacred by Hengist at his feast, are coincidences that lead the mind to believe there may be some connection between the two incidents. But every other circumstance is so unlike, that we may more reasonably suppose, that the actual event occurred in a battle, as Aneurin has exhibited it; and upon a surprise, as we have suggested, and that tradition has erroneously attached it to the first Saxon invader, and feigned the banquet and its calamitous consequences to be the result of a premeditated treachery on a festive invitation; — or that they are what they have been always thought to be, really distinct transactions.

[38] The Gorgordd Mynnydawc mwyn vawr: "the host of Mynnydawg the Courteous," is mentioned in several passages: as

Rac Gorgordd Mynydawc mwyn vawr. — Twice in p. 2.

He is also noticed in p. 10. and 11. The last is

Of the host of Mynnydawg there escaped
But one weapon.

Mr. Davies transforms this proper name into an epithet, implying mountain chief; and then supposes it to mean Vortigern, because North Wales is a mountainous region, and Vortigern was the lord of it, p. 322.

[39] See Triad 79.; 2 Welsh Arch. p. 69.; and Triad 36. p. 8.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

547.

THE same conflict is alluded to in other poems; but its disastrous issue and the inebriety, not the Saxon perfidy, is the usual topic.[40] Even Golyddan, who mentions the massacre of Hengist, has no allusion to Cattraeth or Mynnydawg, nor gives any intimation that it relates to the subject of the Gododin.[41]

[40] It is so mentioned in a poem printed in the Welsh Archaiology, as a part of Taliesin's Dyhuddiant Elphin, though it obviously begins as that ends. Mr. Davies found it to be in one MS. appended to Aneurin's Gododin, Celt. Res. 574. The passage may be thus translated:

A year of sorrow
For the men of Cattraeth!
They nourished me.
Their steel blades;
Their mead;
Their violence;
And their fetters. 1 W. Arch. p. 21.

In the Gorchan Cynvelyn, the incantation of Cynbelyn, it is thus mentioned, as if by Aneurin himself:

Three warriors, and three score, and three hundred,
Went to the tumult at Cattraeth.
Of those that hastened
To the bearers of the mead,
Except three, none returned.

Cynon and Cattraeth
With songs they preserve,
And me — for my blood they bewailed me —
The son of the omen fire,
They made a ransom,
Of pure gold, and steel, and silver. Ibid. p. 61.

[41] The golden torques mentioned by Aneurin was then worn in Britain. "In 1692, an ancient golden torques was dug up near the castle of Harlech, in Merionethshire. It is a wreathed bar of gold, or perhaps three or four rods jointly twisted, about four feet long, flexile, but naturally bending only one way in form of a hat-band; it is hooked at both ends; it is of a round form, about an inch in circumference, and weighs eight ounces." Gibson's Additions to Camden, p. 658. ed. 1695. — Bonduca wore one, Xiphilin. Epit. Dionis, p. 169. ed. H. S. 1591.; and the Gauls used them, Livy, lib. xxxvi. c. 40. Gibson quotes a passage of Virgil, Æneid. lib. v.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

547. Slow progress of the Angles.

THE progress of the Angles in the north was slow and difficult. The Britons appear to have fought more obstinately in these parts than in any other. Three of their kings, besides Urien and his son, are named, Ryderthen, Guallawc, and Morcant[42], as maintaining the struggle against the sons of Ida, and with alternate success. Sometimes the Britons, sometimes the Angles conquered. After one battle, the latter were driven into an adjoining island, and were for three days besieged there[43], till Urien, their pursuer, was assassinated, by an agent of Morcant, one of the British kings that had joined him in the attack on the invaders. The motive to this atrocious action was the military fame which Urien was acquiring.[44] The short reigns of Ida's six immediate successors, induce us to suppose them to have been shortened by the violent deaths of destructive warfare.[45]

Ida's death. 559.

THE death of Ida, in 559, produced a division of his associates. His son Adda succeeded; but one of his allied chieftains, also a descendant of Woden, quitted Bernicia, and sought with those who followed him a new fortune, by attacking the British kingdom of Deifyr, between the Tweed and the Humber. This chieftain was named Ella, and he succeeded in conquering this district, in which he

v. 559., which implies that the Trojan youth wore them.— Llywarch, p. 135., says, that his twenty-four sons were eudorchawg, or wearers of the golden torques, which, from the above description, we perceive was not a chain.

[42] Nennius Geneal. p. 117. [43] Nennius, p. 117.

[44] Nen. p. 117. The Welsh Triads mention this murder in noticing the three foul assassins of Britain. "Llofan Llawddino, who killed Urien, the son of Cynfarch." Trioedd 38. 2 W. A. p. 9.

[45] Thus his son Adda, his eldest son, reigned but seven years; Clappa, five; Theodulf, one; Freothulf, seven; Theodoric, seven; and Ethelric, two. Flor. Wig. 221.

Digitized by Google

raised the Angle kingdom of Deira, and reigned in it for thirty years.[46] Yet though able to force an establishment in this country, many years elapsed before it was completely subdued; for Elmet, which is a part of Yorkshire, was not conquered till the reign of his son, who expelled from it Certic, its British king.[47]

CHAP. IV.

559.

ONE Jute, three Saxon, and three Angle kingdoms were thus established in Britain by the year 560: in Kent, Sussex, Wessex, Essex, East Anglia, Bernicia, and Deira. Another Angle kingdom was about twenty-six years afterwards added in Mercia, which became in time more powerful and celebrated than any other, except that of the West Saxons, who at last conquered it. This kingdom of Mercia made the eighth which these bold adventurers succeeded in founding. It was formed the latest of all. The first enterprises of the Angles against the district in which it was raised, were those of inferior chieftains, whose names have not survived their day; and it seems to have been at first considered as a part of Deira, or an appendage to it. Its foundation is dated in 586.[48] But although Crida is named as its first sovereign, yet it was his grandson, Penda, who is represented as having first separated it from the dominion of the northern Angles.[49]

Establishment of the octarchy.

WHEN we contemplate the slow progress of the Saxon conquests, and the insulated settlements of

[46] Flor. Wig. 221. Sax. ch. 20. [47] Nenn. Geneal. p. 117.

[48] Crida was the first Mercian sovereign, and grandfather to Penda; he began to reign, 586. 3 Gale Scriptores, 229. H. Hunt. 315. 2 Leland's Collectanea, 56., 1 ib. 258. — Leland, ib. i. 211., from an old chronicle, observes, that the Trent divided Mercia into two kingdoms, the north and south.

[49] Nenn. Geneal. 117.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 560.

the first adventurers, we can hardly repress our surprise, that any invader should have effected a permanent residence. Hengist was engaged in hostility for almost all his life; the safety of Ella, in Sussex, was little less precarious. The forces of either were so incommensurable with the numbers and bravery of the people they attacked, that nothing seems to have saved them from expulsion or annihilation, but the civil dissensions of the natives. Fallen into a number of petty states[50], in actual warfare with each other, or separated by jealousy, Britain met the successive invaders with a local, not with a national force, and rarely with any combination. The selfish policy of its chiefs, often viewing with satisfaction the misfortunes of each other, facilitated the successes of the Saxon aggressions.

Frisians in England.

ALTHOUGH the people, who invaded Britain, were principally Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, yet as the Saxon confederation extended from the Baltic to the Rhine, if not to the Scheldt, we can easily accredit the intimations, which we occasionally meet with, that Frisians[51], and their neighbours were mixed with the Saxons. The Britons maintained a long, though a disorderly and ill-conducted struggle, and many fleets of victims must have been sacrificed, by their patriotic vengeance, before the several kingdoms were established. In such a succession of conflicts, the invading chiefs would gladly enlist every band of rovers who offered; and, as in a future day, every coast of Scan-

[50] Tota insula, diversis regibus divisa, subjacuit. Joannes Tinmuth, ap. Usher, 662.

[51] Bede, lib. v. c. 10. Procop. lib. iv. p. 467. Collinus, ap. Canneg. de Britten, p. 68.; and Ubb. Emm. p. 41.; and Spener, 361.

Digitized by Google

dinavia and the Baltic poured their warriors on England, so is it likely that, in the present period, adventurers crowded from every neighbouring district.[52] CHAP. IV. 560.

In this part of our subject we are walking over the country of the departed, whose memory has not been perpetuated by the commemorating heralds of their day. A barbarous age is unfriendly to human fame. When the clods of his hillock are scattered, or his funeral stones are thrown down, the glory of a savage perishes for ever. In after-ages, fancy labours to supply the loss, but her incongruities are visible; and gain no lasting belief.

Opposite to the island of Northstrand, on the western shore of Sleswick, a small tract of land, dangerous from its vicinity to a turbulent sea, was in ancient times occupied by a colony of Frisians. They extended north from Husum for several miles along the sea-coast. In the middle of the district was the town Brested, surrounded by a rich soil, though sands extended beyond. It terminated about Langhorn. The people who dwelt on it were called Strandfrisii, and the tract was denominated Frisia Minor. The marshy soil was colonised by the natives of Friesland, in an age which has not been ascertained. Saxo speaks of Canute the Fifth's journey to it, and then describes it as rich in corn and cattle, and protected from the ocean by artificial mounds. It was a complete Strandfrisii.

[52] So Mascou also thinks, p. 527. Some of the Icelandic writings mention northern kings, who had dominions in Britain, in the sixth and seventh centuries. If they be not entirely fabulous, they may relate to some of these expeditions. On this period we may also recollect the life of the first Offa. See Matt. Paris, Vit. Offæ.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

560.

flat; the waters sometimes were terrible to it; fields were often burst, and carried off to another spot, leaving to their owner a watery lake. Fertility followed the inundation. The people were fierce, active, disdaining heavy armour, and expert with their missile weapons.[53]

It is an opinion of Usher[54], that these Frisians accompanied Hengist into England. To convert Hengist's Jutes into the Strandfrisii Jutes is an exertion of mere conjecture. These Frisii, as well as others from Friesland, may have joined in some of the expeditions, and this probability is all that can be admitted.

The settlements of the Jutes and Anglo-Saxons.

The various parts of Britain, into which the Saxons and their confederates spread themselves, may be stated from the Irish primate's commentary on Bede's brief distinction, which forms the basis of all our reasonings on the subject.[55]

The Jutes possessed Kent, the Isle of Wight, and that part of the coast of Hampshire which fronts it.

The Saxons were distinguished, from their situation, into

South Saxons, who peopled Sussex;

[53] Pontanus Chorograph. 657. Saxo Grammaticus, lib. xiv. p. 260. Ed. Steph. and his Prefatio, p. 3. Frisia Major was not unlike it, as a low marshy soil, much exposed to the fury of the ocean. Saxo, lib. viii. p. 167.; and Steph. notes, 16.

[54] Usher, Primord. 397.

[55] Bede has thus placed them:—The Jutes in Kent and the Isle of Wight; the Saxons in Essex, Sussex, and Wessex; the Angles, whose native country remained in his time a desert, in East Anglia, Midland Anglia, Mercia, and all Northumbria, p. 52. Alfred, in his translation of the passage, makes no addition to this information. The people of Wessex were called Ge-wisi, in Bede's time and before, lib. iii. c. 7.

Digitized by Google

East Saxons, who were in Essex, Middlesex, and the south part of Hertfordshire;

West Saxons, in Surrey, Hampshire (the scite of the Jutes excepted), Berks, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and that part of Cornwall which the Britons were unable to retain. 560.

THE ANGLES were divided into

East Angles, in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, the Isle of Ely, and (it should seem) part of Bedfordshire;

Middle Angles, in Leicestershire, which appertained to Mercia.

The Mercians, divided by the Trent into

South Mercians, in the counties of Lincoln, Northampton, Rutland, Huntingdon, the north parts of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Bucks, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire; —and into

North Mercians, in the counties of Chester, Derby and Nottingham.

The Northumbrians, who were

The Deiri, in Lancaster, York, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Durham;

The Bernicians, in Northumberland, and the south of Scotland, between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth.[56]

[56] Usher, Primord. c. 12. p. 394. With this, Camden's idea may be compared; and for the sentiments of an ingenious modern on the Anglo-Saxon geography, see Dr. Whitaker's Hist. Manchester, lib. ii. c. 4. p. 88.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

The History of the ANGLO-SAXON *Octarchy, and its further Successes against the* BRITONS, *to the beginning of the Seventh Century.*

BOOK III.

560. An octarchy established.

THE exertions of the British against their invaders having thus failed, eight Anglo-Saxon governments were established in the island. This state of Britain has been improperly denominated the Saxon heptarchy.[1] When all the kingdoms were settled, they formed an octarchy. Ella, supporting his invasion in Sussex, like Hengist in Kent, made a Saxon duarchy before the year 500. When Cerdic erected the state of Wessex in 519, a triarchy appeared; East Anglia made it a tetrarchy; Essex a pentarchy. The success of Ida, after 547, having established a sovereignty of Angles in Bernicia, the island beheld a hexarchy. When the northern Ella penetrated, in 560, southward of the Tees, his kingdom of Deira produced a heptarchy. In 586, the Angles branching from Deira into the regions south of the Humber, the state of Mercia completed an Anglo-

[1] Although most of our ancient annalists and modern historians have retained the word heptarchy, yet one old chronicler, I perceive, has more critically said, "Provincia Britonum, quæ modo Anglia nominatur, Saxonum temporibus in octo regna divisa fuerit." Th. Rudborne's Hist. Major. Winton. 1 Anglia Sacra, 187.—Matth. Westm. 198. as correctly states the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to have been eight. He names the eight kings who reigned in 586, p. 200.

The word heptarchy came to be used from the habit of mentioning the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia, under the appellation of Northumbria. But though they were at times united under one sovereign, yet, as they became consolidated, Essex, Kent, or Sussex ceased to be separate and independent kingdoms; so that the term was still improper.

Digitized by Google

Saxon octarchy. As the Anglo-Saxons warred with each other; sometimes one state was for a time absorbed by another; sometimes, after an interval, it emerged again. If that term ought to be used which expresses the complete establishment of the Anglo-Saxons, it should be an Octarchy; if not, then the denomination must vary as the tide of conquest fluctuated. If the collective governments are to be denominated from the nations who peopled them, as these were three, the general term should be triarchy; but it is obvious that Octarchy is the appellation that best suits the historical truth. CHAP. V. 560.

It was in the slow progression which has been stated, that the Anglo-Saxons possessed themselves of the different districts of the island. The Britons, with all the faults of their mode of defence, yielded no part till it had been dearly purchased; and almost a century and a half passed away from the first arrival of Hengist to the full establishment of the octarchy. We cannot state in what year each British principality was destroyed, or each county subdued; but we have seen that, from the sea coasts where they landed, the invaders had always to fight their way with pertinacity, and difficulty, to the inland provinces.

But the Anglo-Saxons, as they advanced, did not, as some have fancied, exterminate the Britons; though many devastations must have accompanied their progress. The fierce warriors of Germany wanted husbandmen, artisans, and menials for domestic purposes. There can be no doubt that the majority of the British population was preserved to be useful to their conquerors. But the latter imposed their own names on every district, place,

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

560.

and boundary; and spread exclusively their own language in the parts which they occupied. It is however true, that some Britons disdained the Saxon yoke, and emigrated to other countries. Armorica, or Bretagne, was the refuge to many. From others, Cornwall and Wales received a large accession of population; and some are even said to have visited Holland.[2]

Restoration of the Britons predicted.

THE most indignant of the Cymry retired into Wales. There, the bards, fugitives like the rest, consoled the expatriated Britons with the hope that the day would afterwards arrive when they should have their full revenge, by driving out the Saxon hordes. Not only Taliesin sung this animating prediction[3]; Myrddin also promised the Britons

[2] H. Cannegieter, in his Dissertation de Brittenburgo, Hag. Co. 1734, has particularly examined this point. His decision is, that Brittenberg was named from the Britons, but was built by the Romans. He prefers, to the assertion of Gerbrandus, that the Britons fled from the Saxons to Holland and built Catwych on the Rhine, the opinion of Colinus, the ancient monastical poet, who admits that they visited and ravaged it, but affirms that they did not settle.

[3] A serpent with chains,
Towering and plundering,
With armed wings
From Germania;

This will overrun
All Loegria and Brydon,
From the land of the Lochlin sea.
To the Severn.

After mentioning that the Britons will be exiles and prisoners to Saxony, he adds,

Their lord they shall praise,
Their language preserve,
Their country lose,
Except wild Wales,
Till the destined period of their triumph revolves,

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

560.

that they should again be led by their majestic chief, and be again victorious. He boldly announced, that in this happy day should be restored to every one his own; that then the horns of gladness should proclaim the song of peace, the serene days of Cambrian happiness.[4] The anticipation of this blissful æra gave rapture to the Cymry, even in their stony paradise of Wales.[5] The proud invaders mocked the vaunting prophecy, and, to render it nugatory, unpeopled some of their native coasts on the Baltic[6], and filled Britain with an active and hardy race, whose augmenting population and persevering valour at length carried the hated Saxon sceptre even to the remotest corners of venerated Anglesey. But up to the reign of Alfred, and even afterwards, the Britons still maintained their own kingdoms in Cornwall and part of Devonshire, and in that portion of the north which

Then the Britons will obtain
The crown of their land,
And the strange people
Will vanish away.

He concludes with declaring that Michael had predicted the future happiness of Britain. Taliesin, p. 94.

Gildas, p. 8., states, that the Saxons had a prophecy that they should ravage Britain 150 years, and enjoy it 150. The limitation has rather a Cambrian aspect.

[4] Myrddin's Afallenau, p. 153. Golyddan, in his Arymes Prydein vawr, endeavours to inspire his countrymen by a similar prediction. The first part is a review of the transactions between Hengist and the Britons. It is in the Welsh Archaiology, vol. i. p. 156—159.

[5] These epithets are Welsh. Stony Wales is a phrase of Taliesin, and Llywarch denominates Powis "the paradise of the Cymry," p. 119.

[6] Bede affirms the complete emigration of the Angles; he says, their country "ab eo tempore usque hodie manere desertus," lib. i. c. 15. To the like purpose Nennius, "ita ut insulas de quibus venerant absque habitatore relinquerunt," c. 87.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

composed the Stratclyde district. It was not till Athelstan's reign that they finally lost Exeter.

571. THE Britons long after Arthur's death maintained their patriotic struggle against the kingdom of Wessex. They fought, though unsuccessfully, at Bedford, against the brother of Ceawlin, as we have noticed before. The Anglo-Saxon, in marching back to Wessex, through the districts then still in the hands of the natives, took Lygeanburh, Aylesbury, Bensington, and Ensham.[7] Six years afterwards, the Britons again resisted the progressive ambition of the Saxons. An important battle occurred between them at Derham, in Gloucestershire, in which some of the kings of Wales appear to have confederated against the invaders; for three British sovereigns, Conmail, Condidan, and Farinmail fell in the conflict[8]: two of these seem to be the princes lamented by Llywarch Hen in one of his elegies[9]:

[7] Sax. Ch. 22. Fl. Wig. 222. Ethelw. 834.
[8] Sax. Ch. 22. Fl. Wig. 223. Ethelw. 835.
[9] His Marwnad Cynddylan, the son Cyndrwyn. It begins energetically:—

Stand out, ye virgins,
And behold the habitation of Cynddylan.
The palace of Pengwern:
Is it not in flames?
Woe to the young who wish for social bonds.

One tree with the woodbine round it
Perhaps may escape,
What God wills; be it done.
Cynddylan!
Thy heart is like the wintry ice.
Twrch pierced thee through the head.
Thou gavest the ale of Tren. W. Arch. p. 107.

The venerable bard proceeds with his panegyrical apostrophes to his deceased friend, calling him the bright pillar of his country; the sagacious in thought; with the heart of a hawk, of a greyhound, of a wild boar; and daring as a wolf tracing the fallen carcase. See it translated by Dr. Owen Pugh, p. 71—105.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

571.

the last was king of Monmouthshire.[10] The capture of three cities, then of considerable note among the Britons, as they are now to us, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, were the fruits of the Saxon victory.[11]

SEVEN years afterwards, we read of Ceawlin pursuing hostilities against the Britons on the Severn. A bloody contest occurred at Frithern. The Britons fought with earnest resolution, and for some time with unusual success. The brother of the West Saxon king was slain, and his forces gave way. But Ceawlin rallied his countrymen, and, after great slaughter, obtained the victory. The issue was as decisive as it had been long doubtful; and many towns were added to Wessex, and a vast booty divided among the conquerors.[12] The

He also commemorates Caranmael, apparently the Saxon Conmail.

> I heard from the meadow the clattering of shields.
> The city confines not the mighty.
> The best of men was Caranmael. W. A. p. 112.

He also laments the fall of Freuer:—

> Is it not the death of Freuer,
> That separates me this night?
> Fatal end of social comfort!
> It breaks my sleep. I weep at the dawn. W. A. p. 110.

[10] I do not know that the Freuer of Llywarch means the same person as Farinmail; but it is likely that this was the Fernvail who was then reigning in Gwent or Monmouthshire. See Regis. Landew, quoted by Langhorn in his useful Chronicle, p. 115.

[11] See before, p. 275. Ethelwerd calls these cities, urbes eorum clariores, p. 835. Huntingdon's epithet is excellentissimas, p. 315.

[12] Flor. 224. Hunt. 315. M. Westm. omits the ultimate success of Ceawlin, and states it as a British victory, p. 198. Soon after this contest, Langhorn quotes Io. Salisb. Poylc. v. c. 17., to say, that "paulo post Anglorum introitum impositum fuisse Angliæ nomen." Langhorn has here departed from his usual accuracy. The passage of our elegant monk is lib. v. c. 17. p. 197., and merely mentions

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Britons, with undismayed perseverance, fought again seven years afterwards, at Wanborough, and appear to have obtained a complete victory.[13] There were probably many efforts of minor importance made by the Britons which the Saxon chroniclers have not noticed.[14]

560.

The Anglo-Saxons war with each other.

But as soon as the Anglo-Saxon kings had so far subdued the Britons, as to be in no general danger from their hostility, and began to feel their own strength in the growing population of their provinces, and in the habitual submission of the natives, their propensity to war, and their avarice of power, excited them to turn their arms upon each other.

568. Ethelbert invades Ceawlin.

It was the impatience of a young mind to distinguish itself, which thus began a new series of wars that lasted till Egbert. The attacks and successes of the West Saxons and the South Saxons had turned off from Kent the direction of British hostility. Left at leisure for the indulgence of youthful turbulence, Ethelbert, the fourth successor of Hengist, at the age of sixteen, presumed to invade Ceawlin, the king of Wessex. This ac-

that "ab inventu Saxonum in insulam appellatur Anglia." These words determine no chronology like paulo post. They express only one of the consequences of the Saxon invasion, without marking the precise time of the change of name.

[13] The brief intimation of the Saxon Chronicle, p. 22., is more fully expressed in Hunt. 315.; and Ethelwerd ascribes to this battle the expulsion of Ceawlin from his throne, p. 835.

[14] Thus Meigant, the British bard of the seventh century, mentions an expedition of the British chief Morial:—

> Pacing to combat, a great booty
> Before Caer Lwydgoed, has not Morial taken
> Fifteen hundred cattle and the head of Gwrial?
>
> 1 W. Ar. p. 160.

Digitized by Google

tion seems to have been intemperate. Ceawlin had displayed both talent and resources for war, and Kent never attained the territorial extent or power of Wessex. But it is probable that the Anglo-Saxons know nothing as yet of the geography or comparative strength of their respective kingdoms. The issue of this contest taught Kent to understand better its true position in the political scale of the octarchy. Ceawlin collected his troops, defeated Ethelbert at Wimbledon, and threatened the Kentish Jutes with the subjection which they had armed to impose.[15] This is remarked to have been the first battle that occurred between the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns.[16]

568.

CEAWLIN soon imitated, but with more success from his superior means, the ambition of Ethelbert. On the death of its sovereign, Cissa, he obtained the kingdom of Sussex. By annexing it to West Saxony, he changed the Saxon octarchy into a temporary heptarchy.

584.

DREADED for his power and ambition, Ceawlin now preponderated over the other Saxon monarchs[17]; but his prosperity changed before his

Ceawlin's death.

[15] Sax. Chron. p. 21. Flor. Wigorn. 222. Malmsbury attributes the aggression to Ethelbert's desire of engrossing præ antiquitate familiæ primas partes sibi, p. 12.

[16] Hunt. 315. About this time, in 578, the Saxons obtained a settlement in France. They were placed in the Armorican region after their irruption, in finibus Bajocassium et Namnetensium. Bouquet's Recueil des Historiens des Gaules, vol. ii. p. 250.—Hence Gregory of Tours calls them Saxones Bajocassos, lib. v. c. 10. It is curious that they were sent against the British Settlers in Gaul, who defeated them. Gregory, lib. v. c. 27. Their district, Charles the Bald, in his Laws apud Silvacum, calls Linguam Saxonicam. Bouquet, p. 250.

[17] Bede, lib. ii. c. 5. He was the second Saxon prince so distinguished.—Matt. West. says generally, "magnificatum est nomen

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

591.

death. His nephew, Ceolric, allied with the Cymry and the Scoti against him; and all the valour and conduct of Ceawlin, could not rescue him from a defeat, in the thirty-third year of his reign, at Wodnesburg, in Wilts, the mound of Woden already alluded to.[18] His death soon followed, and the unnatural kinsman succeeded to the crown he had usurped. He enjoyed it during a short reign of five years, and Ceolwulf acceded.

THE disaster of Ceawlin gave safety to Kent. Ethelbert preserved his authority in that kingdom, and at length succeeded to that insulary predominance among the Anglo-Saxon kings, which they called the Bretwalda, or the ruler of Britain.[19] Whether this was a mere title assumed by Hengist, and afterwards by Ella, and continued by the most successful Anglo-Saxon prince of his day, or con-

ejus vehementer," p. 197.—Langhorn fancied that he was the Gormund, whom the Britons mention with horror. Chron. Reg. Angliæ, 123. This Gormund, by some styled king of the Africans, by others a pirate of Norway or Ireland, is fabled to have invaded the Britons with 166,000 Africans. Rad. dic., 559., 3 Gale, and Jeffry, 12. 2. Alanus de Insulis, lib. i. p. 25., gives him 360,000.

[18] Sax. Chron. 22. Ceola, as Flor. Wig. 225., names him, was son of Cuthulf. Ethelwerd, 835.—This village stands upon the remarkable ditch called Wansdike, which Camden thought a Saxon work to divide Mercia from Wessex, and which others have supposed to have been a defence against the incursions of the Britons.

[19] Bede, lib. ii. c. 5., names him as the third qui imperavit all the provinces south of the Humber. Malmsbury amplifies this into "omnes nationes Anglorum præter Northanhimbros continuis victoriis domitas sub jugum traxit," p. 10.—The Saxon Chron. calls him one of the seven bretwaldas who preceded Egbert. The proper force of this word bretwalda cannot imply conquest, because Ella the First is not said to have conquered Hengist or Cerdic; nor did the other bretwaldas conquer the other Saxon kingdoms. The Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, to whom Bede gives this title in succession, are Ella, of Sussex; Ceawlin, of Wessex; Ethelbert, of Kent; Redwald, of East Anglia; Edwin, Oswald, and Oswy, of Northumbria; and see Hunt. 314.

Digitized by Google

ceded in any national council of all the Anglo-Saxons; or ambitiously assumed by the Saxon king that most felt and pressed his temporary power; whether it was an imitation of the British unbennaeth, or a continuation of the Saxon custom of electing a war cyning, cannot now be ascertained. CHAP. V. 591.

WHILE Ceolwulf was governing Wessex, Ethelfrith, the grandson of Ida, reigned in Bernicia, and attacked the Britons with vehemence and perseverance. None peopled more districts of the ancient Cymry with Angles, or more enslaved them with tributary services.[20] It is probable that he extended his conquests to the Trent. Alarmed by his progress, Aidan advanced with a great army of Britons either from Scotland, or those who in the Cumbrian or Strat-clyde kingdoms, and their vicinity, still preserved their independence, to repress him. The Angles met him at Degsastan; a furious battle ensued, which the determination of the combatants made very deadly. The Britons fought both with conduct and courage, and the brother of Ethelfrith perished, with all his followers. At length the Scottish Britons gave way, and were destroyed with such slaughter, that the king, with but few attendants, escaped.[21] They had not, up to the time of Bede, ventured to molest the Angles again. 603. Successes of Ethelfrith.

THE colonists of Sussex, endeavouring to throw off the yoke of Ceolwulf, this West Saxon king, who is mentioned as always engaged in quarrels with the Angles, Britons, Picts, or Scots, ventured on a conflict with him, which, disastrous to both

[20] Hunt. 315.

[21] Bede, lib. i. c. 34. Sax. Chron. 24.—The position of this, as of most of the Saxon battles, is disputed. Dalston, near Carlisle, and Dawston, near Jedbrough, has each its advocate.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

armies, was most fatal to the assertors of their independence.[22]

607. or 612.

THE Bernician conqueror, Ethelfrith, renewed his war with the Cymry. He reached Chester, through a course of victory. Apart from the forces of the Welsh, assembled under Brocmail, king of Powys, he perceived the monks of Bangor, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success of their countrymen: "If they are praying against us," he exclaimed, "they are fighting against us;" and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed[23]; and, appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocmail wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay.[24] Thus abandoned by their leader, his army gave way, and Ethelfrith obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor itself soon fell into his hands, and was demolished[25]; the noble

Bangor destroyed.

[22] H. Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. p. 25.

[23] The chronology of this battle is disputed. The Saxon Chronicle dates it in 607, p. 25.; Flor. Wig. 603; the Annals of Ulster in 612; Matt. West. in 603, p. 204. The ancient Welsh chronologer, in the Cambrian Reg. for 1796, places it in 602, and fourteen years before the battle of Meigen, p. 313. Bede says, that Austin had been jam multo ante tempore ad cælestia regna sublato, lib. ii. c. 2.; but Austin died in 605.

[24] Brocmail was one of the patrons of Taliesin, who commemorates this struggle: —

I saw the oppression of the tumult; the wrath and tribulation;
The blades gleaming on the bright helmets;
The battle against the Lord of Fame in the dales of Hafren;
Against Brocvail of Powys, who loved my muse.

Taliesin, p. 66.

[25] Ancient Bangor was about eight miles distant from Chester. Caius de Antiq. Cantab. lib. i. ap. Usher, 133. — Leland says, "the cumpace of the abbay was as of a waullid toune, and yet remaineth the name of a gate caullid Porth Hogan by north, and the name of another, port Clays by south. — Dee syns chaunging the bottom rennith now thoroug the mydle betwyxt thes two gates, one being a mile dim from the other." Itiner. vol. v.. p. 26.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

monastery was levelled to the earth; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed[26]; half ruined walls, gates, and rubbish, were all that remained of the magnificent edifice.[27] We may presume that the addition of Cheshire to Bernicia was the consequence of the victory. 610.

Tewdric defeats Ceolwulph.

But amidst their misfortunes, the Cymry sometimes triumphed. Ceolwulph from Wessex advanced upon them, not merely to the Severn, but crossed it into the province of Glamorgan. Affrighted at his force, the inhabitants hastened to Tewdric their former king, who had quitted his dignity in behalf of his son Mowrick, to lead a solitary life among the beautiful rocks and woodlands of Tintern. They solicited him to re-assume the military command, in which he had never known disgrace, if he sympathised in the welfare of his countrymen or his son. The royal hermit beheld the dreaded Saxons on the Wye, but the remembrance of his own achievements inspired him with hope. He put on his forsaken armour, conducted the tumult of battle with his former skill, and drove the invaders over the Severn. A mortal wound in the head arrested him in the full enjoyment of his success, and he breathed his last wishes for his people's safety at

[26] Humph. Lhuyd asserts this. Comm. Frag. Brit. Descript. 58., and Giraldus Cambrensis declares that Chester also was destroyed. De illaud. Walliæ, c. 7. And it is not likely that a rude Anglo-Saxon warrior would take any care to preserve British MSS. This destruction was an irreparable loss to the ancient British antiquities.

[27] Malmsbury, 19. — In the Triads Bangor is paralleled with the isle of Avallon, and Caer Caradog, for possessing 2400 religious. The Bangor of modern note is a city built by Maelgo on the Meneath, near Anglesea, Joh. Rossius, ap. Usher, 133.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 610.

the confluence of the Severn and the Wye. The local appellation Mathern, the abbreviation of Merthyr Teudric[28], pointed out his remains to the sympathy of posterity: in the sixteenth century his body was found unconsumed, and the fatal blow on his head was visible.[29]

Distress of the Welsh.

THE condition of the Britons at this juncture was becoming more distressful and degrading. Driven out of their ancient country, they had retired to those parts of the island, which, by mountains, woods, marshes, and rivers, were most secluded from the rest; yet in this retreat they lived, with their hands against every man[30], and every man's hand against them; they were the common butt of enterprise to the Angles of Bernicia, and Deira, and Mercia; to the Saxons of Wessex, and to the Gwiddelians of Ireland; and they were always as eager to assail as to defend. The wild prophecies of enthusiasts, who mistook hope for inspiration, having promised to them, in no long period, the enjoyment of the soil from which they had been exiled, produced a perpetual appetite for war. Their independent sovereignties fed, by their hostile ambition, the flames of domestic quarrels, and accelerated the ruin of their independence. But yet, under all these disadvantages, they maintained the unequal conflict against the Anglo-Saxons with wonderful bravery, and did not lose the sovereignty of their country until the improve-

[28] The martyr Tewdric. Usher quotes the Register of Llandaff for this conflict, p. 562.—Langhorn. Chron. p. 148.

[29] Godwin præsul. ap. Usher, 563. In the chancel of Mathern church an epitaph mentions that he lies there entombed. Williams's Monmouthshire, App. No. 17.

[30] Matt. West. paints this forcibly, p. 198. and 199.

Digitized by Google

ments of their conquerors made the conquest a blessing.

614. Cynegils' victory.

Cynegils with the West Saxons again assailed some branches of the Britons. If Bampton in Devonshire be the place which the Saxon annalist denominates Beamdune, the princes of Cornwall were the objects of attack. When the armies met, Cynegils surprised the Britons by drawing up his forces into an arrangement which was not common to that age. This display and the sight of the battle-axes, which the Saxons were brandishing, affected them with a sudden panic, and they quitted the field early, with the loss of above two thousand men.[31]

[31] Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. 25. Camden supposes the place to have been Bindon, in Dorsetshire, 1 Gough's ed. 44. The editor mentions favourably the opinion of Gibson, which is in the text, ib. p. 50.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

The Introduction of Christianity among the ANGLO-SAXONS, *in* KENT *and* ESSEX.—ETHELBERT'*s Reign in* KENT.

BOOK III.

THE history of the Anglo-Saxons has, thus far, been the history of fierce, barbaric tribes; full of high courage, excited spirit, persevering resolution, great activity, and some military skill; but with minds which, although abounding with talent and love of enterprise, and inventive of political institutions, well adapted to their civil position and necessities, were void of all lettered cultivation; unused to the social sympathies, and averse from the intellectual refinements, of which they were naturally capable. These great blessings of human life were introduced into the island, with that peculiar form of Christianity, which the benevolent feelings and religious enthusiasm of Pope Gregory deservedly, with all his imperfections, surnamed the Great, conveyed into England by his missionary Augustin. This great mental and moral, we may add from some of its results, political revolution, was suggested and accomplished by a train of coincidences, which deserve to be recollected.

THE Roman papacy had felt the advantage, to itself, of the conversion of the Gothic nations; and Gregory, in succeeding to that dignity, would have imbibed a disposition to promote the same religious policy, if his own earnest belief in Chris-

Digitized by Google

tianity had not led him to befriend it. But the Anglo-Saxons were not the only nation of Europe that were then pagans. All Germany, and all the nations from the Rhine to the Frozen Ocean, and all the Slavonian tribes, were of this description. England, which Rome had long before amused itself with describing, as cut off from the whole world, and as approaching the frozen and half-fabled Thule, was so remote, and, by its Saxon conquerors, had been so separated from any connection with the civilised regions, that it seemed to be the country least adapted to interest him. But an accidental circumstance, which does credit to his heart, had turned the current of Gregory's feelings towards our island, before he had reached the pontifical honours.

It was then the practice of Europe to make use of slaves, and to buy and sell them; and this traffic was carried on, even in the western capital of the Christian church. As he was passing one day through the market at Rome, the white skins, the flowing locks, and beautiful countenances of some youths who were standing there for sale, interested Gregory's sensibility.[1]

To his inquiries from what country they had been brought, the answer was, from Britain, whose

[1] The chronicler of St. Augustin's monastery at Canterbury, W. Thorn, mentions that these were three boys: "Videt in foro Romano tres pueros Anglicos," Decem. Script. p. 1757. In the Anglo-Saxon homily on Gregory's birth-day, published by Mrs. Elstob, it is stated that English merchants had carried them to Rome, and that the practice was continuing: — "Tha ȝelamp het æt ſumum ſæle ſpa ſpa ȝyt ſop oft beth, thæt Engliſce cýthmen bpohton heopa paſle to Romana býpiȝ. ⁊ Lpeȝopiuſ eode be thæpe ſtpæt to tham Engliſcum mannum heopa chinȝ ſceapiȝenbe. Tha ȝefeah he betpuxt tham paſum cýpecnichtaſ ȝefette. Tha þæpon hpiteſ lichaman ⁊ fæȝpeſ ⁊ plitan man ⁊ æthelice ȝefeaxobe," p. 11.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

inhabitants were all of that fair complexion. Were they Pagans or Christians? was his next question: a proof not only of his ignorance of the state of England, but also, that, up to that time, it had occupied no part of his attention. But thus brought as it were to a personal knowledge of it, by these few representatives of its inhabitants, he exclaimed, on hearing that they were still idolaters, with a deep sigh: "What a pity, that such a beauteous frontispiece should possess a mind so void of internal graces!" The name of their nation being mentioned to him to be Angles, his ear caught the verbal coincidence. The benevolent wish for their improvement darted into his mind, and he expressed his own feelings, and excited those of his auditors by remarking: "It suits them well: they have angel faces, and ought to be the co-heirs of the angels in heaven." A purer philanthropy perhaps never breathed from the human heart, than in these sudden effusions of Gregory's. That their provincial country Deira, should resemble the words De ira, seemed to his simple mind to imply, that they ought to be plucked from the wrath of God; and when he heard that their king's name was called Ella, the consonancy of its sound, with the idea then floating in his mind, completed the impression of the whole scene. His full enthusiasm burst out, "Hallelujah! the praise of the creating Deity must be sung in these regions."[2] This succession of coincidences, though but verbal,

[2] Bede, Hist. lib. ii. c. 1. p. 78. This incident was probably in Gregory's mind, when he wrote this passage in his moral exposition of Job. "Ecce lingua Britanniæ, quæ nil aliud noverat, quam barbarum frendere, jamdudum in divinis laudibus Hebræum cepit, Halleluia, resonare," lib. xxvi. c. 6. p. 688. ed. Paris. 1640.

Digitized by Google

affected his mind with a permanent impression of the most benevolent nature. He went immediately to the then pope, and prayed him to send some missioners to convert the English nation, and offered himself for the service. His petition was refused, but the project never left his mind, till he was enabled by his own efforts to accomplish it. As Ella died in 589, this incident must have occurred before this year. CHAP. VI.

In 592, Gregory became pope, and four years afterwards he attempted to execute his philanthropic purpose. He selected a monk named Augustin, as the fittest for the chief of the mission, and added some other monks of congenial feelings to assist it. They set out on their journey, but the dread of encountering a nation so ferocious, as the Saxons had from their successes the character of being, and ignorance of their language, overcame both their resolution and their zeal. They stopped, began their return to Rome, and sent Augustin back to solicit Gregory not to insist on their pursuing an enterprise so dangerous and so little likely to be availing.[3] 592.

Gregory prevailed on Augustin to resume the mission, and answered the entreaties of the rest by a short but impressive letter. He remarked to them that it was more disgraceful to abandon an undertaking once begun, than to have at first declined it. That as the work was good, and would receive the Divine aid, they ought to pursue it. He reminded them of the glory that would recompense their sufferings in another world, and he appointed Augustin their abbot, and commanded

[3] Bede, lib. i. c. 23. p. 59.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

596.

their obedience to his directions, that the little community might have an effective governor.[4] He wrote also to the bishop of Arles, recommending this band of religious adventurers to his friendship and assistance. He addressed letters to other prelates in France to the same purport. He requested the patronage of the Frankish kings to their undertaking; and also endeavoured to interest Brunechilda, one of their queens, to befriend it. The missionaries were forty in number.[5]

But to which kingdom of the octarchy should they first apply? a natural circumstance led them to Kent.

Ethelbert, who had begun his reign with the inauspicious attack on Wessex, had been afterwards so harassed by others of the Saxon kings, that it was with difficulty he preserved his own dominions from subjection.[6] Adversity and danger had made him wiser. His future measures were more prosperous, and he became the Brætwalda of the Saxon octarchy, and predominated over it as far north as the Humber.

The circumstance auspicious to Augustin's mission was Ethelbert's marriage with Bertha, a Frankish princess. She had been educated to be a Christian, and she had stipulated for the right of pursuing her own religion after her marriage.[7] To Kent and to this queen Augustin proceeded

[4] Bede, lib. i. c. 23. p. 59.

[5] These letters of Gregory are printed amid his very multifarious correspondence, which are classed in twelve books, and occupy the fourth volume of his works. Dr. Smith has selected those which concern this mission, in the appendix to his Bede, No. 6.; and Mrs. Elstob has translated them in her appendix, p. 7, &c.

[6] Malmsb. p. 10. [7] Bede, lib. i. c. 25. Hunting. 321.

Digitized by Google

with his companions, with interpreters whom the king of the Francs had provided. CHAP. VI.

AUGUSTIN sent one of these to Ethelbert, to announce that he came from Rome, and had brought with him a messenger, who promised to those that obeyed him everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that should never end. The king, whom the conduct of his queen had dispossessed of all virulence against Christianity ordered them to remain in Thanet, where they had landed, supplied with every necessary, till he had determined what he should do with them. 93.

INTERESTED by their arrival, the queen was not likely to be inactive. But the freedom of all the Anglo-Saxon tribes, and the power of their witenagemots, as well as the opposing influence of the Saxon priests, occasioned Ethelbert to pause. After a few days' deliberation, he went into the island and appointed a conference. He sat in the open air, fearful lest, if he received them in a house, he should be exposed to the power of their magic if they used any. They came with a simple but impressive ceremony. They advanced in an orderly procession, preceded by a silver cross, as their standard, and carrying also a painted portrait of our Saviour, and chanting their litany as they approached. The king commanded them to sit down, and to him and his earls, who accompanied them, they disclosed their mission.[8] Ethelbert answered with a steady and not unfriendly judg- 597.

[8] Bede, lib. i. c. 25. p. 61. The homily briefly states the substance of the address of Augustin: — "Hu ꝥe mildheortra hælend mid hiꝛ agenre þrowunge þinre ꝥcyldigan middaneard alyꝛde ⁊ geleaꝛfullum mannum heofena ꝥicer inn æfter geonoude," p. 34. The substance of the sermon is given at length by Joscelin, Angl. Sac. vol. ii. p. 59.; and a translation of it in Elstob. p. 33.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 597.

ment. "Your words and promises are fair, but they are new and uncertain. I cannot therefore abandon the rites, which in common with all the nations of the Angles, I have hitherto observed. But as you have come so far to communicate to us what you believe to be true, and the most excellent, we will not molest you. We will receive you hospitably, and supply you with what you need. Nor do we forbid any one to join your society whom you can persuade to prefer it." He gave them a mansion in Canterbury, his metropolis, for their residence, and allowed them to preach as they pleased.[9]

They entered the city singing the litanies, which they had found to be interesting to the populace. They distinguished themselves by prayers, vigils, and fastings, which excited the admiration of those who visited them; and their discourses pleased many. On the east side of the city, a church had been built, during the residence of the Romans, dedicated to St. Martin, which the queen had used as her oratory. Here they sang, prayed, performed their mass, and preached till they made several converts, whom they baptised. The impression spread, till at length the king was affected,

[9] The text is from Bede, p. 61. But Alfred's Saxon of this speech perhaps exhibits most exactly the actual words of Ethelbert: Fægepe wopð thiſ ſýnð anð gehat the gebpohtcon ȝ uſ ſæcgach. Ac ſopthon hi nipe ſýnbon anð uncuthe, ne mazon pe nu gýt tha gethaſigean tha pe ſoplætan tha piran the pe langepe tibe miðealle Angel theobe heolðan. Ac ſopthon the ge ſeoppan hiðep ælcheobige coman anð thæȝ the me gethuht anð geſapen iſ tha thing tha the ſoth anð betȝt gelyfbon, tha ge eac ſpylce pyllaðon uſ tha gemænſuman, ne pyllath pe ſopðbon eop hepige beon: Ac pe þillath eop ſnemſumlice on gærſthnepſſe onſon anð eop anðlýſne ſýllan anð eoppe theapfe ſonȝiſan. Ne pe eop bepepiath tha ge ealle tha the ge mazon thuph eoppe lape to eoppeſ geleaſan æpeſcnýſſe getheobe anð gecýpne," p. 487.

Digitized by Google

and became himself a Christian.[10] In no part of the world has Christianity been introduced in a manner more suitable to its benevolent character. CHAP. VI. 597.

THE peculiar form of this religion, which Gregory and Augustin thus introduced, was of course that system which Rome then professed. It was the best system which had been recognised at Rome; and it could not be better than that age or the preceding times were capable of receiving or framing. It was a compound of doctrines, ritual, discipline, and polity, derived partly from the Scriptures, partly from tradition, partly from the decisions and orders of former councils and popes, and partly from popular customs and superstitions, which had been permitted to intermix themselves. But such as it was, it was the most impressive form that either its teachers or the then intellect of the world could furnish. Nor is it clear that its new converts would have relished or understood any purer system. The papal clergy were then the most enlightened portion of the western world; and the system which they preferred must have been superior to any that the barbaric judgment could have provided.

THE pope continued his attentions to his infant church. He sent Augustin the pall, the little addition to his dress which marked the dignity of an archbishop, with a letter of instructions on the formation of the English hierarchy: also several MSS. of books[11], ecclesiastical vessels, vestments,

[10] Bede, c. 26.

[11] Bede, c. 29. p. 70. Wanley has given a catalogue of the books sent by Gregory. These were, 1st, A Bible, adorned with some leaves of a purple and rose colour, in two volumes, which was extant in the time of James the First: 2d, The Psalter of St. Augustin, with the Creed, Pater Noster, and several Latin hymns: 3d, Two

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

and ornaments[12], and some religious persons to assist him, who were afterwards active in the conversion of the rest of the island. Augustin restored from its ruins another British church at Canterbury, which had been built in the Roman times, and began the erection of a monastery.[13] The king sanctioned and assisted him in all that he did; and afterwards became distinguished as the author of the first written Saxon laws, which have descended to us, or which are known to have been established; — an important national benefit, for which he may have been indebted to his Christian teachers, as there is no evidence that the Saxons wrote any compositions before. Gregory sent into the island "many manuscripts," and thus began its intellectual as well as religious education.[14]

597.

604. SEVEN years after Augustin's successful exertions in Kent, he appointed two of the persons that arrived last from Rome, Mellitus and Justus, to the episcopal dignity, and directed them to the kingdom of Essex. Sabert, the son of Ethelbert's sister, was then reigning. The new religion was

copies of the Gospels, with the ten Canons of Eusebius prefixed; one of which Elstob believed to be in the Bodleian library, and the other at Cambridge, p. 42: 4th, Another Psalter with hymns: 5th, A volume containing legends on the sufferings of the apostles, with a picture of our Saviour in silver, in a posture of blessing: 6th, Another volume on the martyrs, which had on the outside a glory, silver gilt, set round with crystals and beryls: 7th, An exposition of the Epistles and Gospels, which had on the cover a large beryl surrounded with crystals. Augustin also brought Gregory's Pastoral Care, which Alfred translated. See Elstob, p. 39—43., and Wanley, 172., whose description is taken from Thomas de Elmham, a monk of Augustin's abbey, in the time of Henry the Fifth. See also Cave, Hist. Lit. p. 431.

[12] A list of the vestments, vessels, relics, &c., sent by Gregory is added to Elstob, from Wanley's communication, App. 34—40.

[13] Bede, lib. i. c. 33.

[14] Bede, lib. i. c. 29.

Digitized by Google

favourably received; and Ethelbert, to whose superior power the little state was subject, began the erection of St. Paul's church at London, its metropolis.[15] CHAP. VI. 604.

Augustin did not long live to contemplate the great advantages which he had introduced into England. He died the year of his mission into Essex. Ethelbert survived him eleven years. This King's son Eadbald restored the Saxon paganism in Kent, and drove out the Christian ecclesiastics. The three sons of Sabert imitated him in Essex. But this persecution was of a short duration. A simple contrivance of Laurence, the successor of Augustin, affected the mind of Eadbald with alarm. He appeared before the king, bleeding from severe stripes; and boldly declared that he had received them in the night from St. Peter, because he was meditating his departure from the island. The idea was exactly level with the king's intellect and superstition. A strong sensation of fear that the same discipline might be inflicted, by the same invisible hand, on himself, changed his feelings, and he became a zealous friend to the new faith. The exiled bishops were recalled, and the old Saxon rites were abolished for ever in Kent and Essex.[16]

Laurence enjoyed his triumph but two years; and, on his death, Mellitus, who had converted Essex, received his dignity: a man of noble family, and of such an active spirit, that the gout, with which he was severely afflicted, was no impediment to his unabated exertions for the mental and moral improvement of the Saxon nation. All these early prelates enjoyed their rank but for a brief

[15] Bede, lib. ii. c. 3. [16] Ibid. lib. ii. c. 5, 6.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 604.

period. In five years Mellitus, died, and Justus, his friend and companion from Rome, was made his successor.[17] As Gregory had chosen the men who were best adapted to accomplish his purpose, it is probable that those he selected were advanced in life.[18]

[17] Bede, lib. ii. c. 7, 8. Gregory has also a claim to our grateful remembrance for his improvement in church music. He reformed the chant of St. Ambrose, and enlarged its plan by introducing four new modes or tones into the canto fermo; he formed the Roman or Gregorian chant which his missioned monks introduced into England. On particular occasions it is still used in the Roman Catholic Church, especially during Lent, and it is felt to have a breadth, a dignity, and a simplicity, which render it acceptable even to modern composers. He first separated the chanters from the regular clergy, and led the way to our present system of notation, by substituting the first seven Roman letters for the notes of the octave, in place of the more complicated Greek notes. Choron. Hist. of Music; and see Hogarth's Musical History.

[18] Gregory appears, from his works and extensive correspondence, to have been a man of no common energies, acting in the sincerest spirit of Christianity. He, like Alfred the Great, is an instance how much an active-minded man may do amid great bodily infirmities. For this indefatigable pope was seldom in comfortable health. In one letter from Rome he writes: "I have been almost eleven months confined to my bed. I am so oppressed with the gout that life is a heavy punishment. I faint daily through pain, and breathe after death as my remedy. Among the clergy and people of the city, scarce a freeman or a slave is exempt from fevers." L. 7. Ep. 127. To Eulogius, of Alexandria, he mentioned in the following year, "I have been near two years confined to my bed in constant pain: often have I been forced by its violence to return to my bed when I had scarcely left it. Thus I am dying daily, and yet I am alive." In another letter, he speaks of a distressing headach; and, in another, of a grievous burning heat, which spread over all his body and deprived him of his spirits and comfort. In his preface to Job, and elsewhere, he mentions other illnesses, as severely and almost continually afflicting him.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

Expedition of the EAST ANGLIANS *to the* RHINE. — EDWIN'S *Asylum in* EAST ANGLIA. — REDWALD'S *Defeat of* ETHELFRITH. — EDWIN'S *Reign in* NORTHUMBRIA, *and the introduction of Christianity into that Province.*

CHAP. VII.

Expedition of the East Anglians to the continent. 534—547.

THE kingdom of East Anglia becomes remarkable by an incident which Procopius has preserved, and which occurred in the sixth century. It exhibits the adventuring spirit of our early Saxon princes.

BETWEEN the Rhine and the Northern Ocean, the Varni inhabited.[1] Their king solicited a princess of East Anglia for his son, and the hand of the lady was promised. On his death-bed it occurred to him, that an alliance with the Francs, his neighbours, would be more profitable to his people than the friendship of the Angles, who were separated from the Varni by the sea. In obedience to the political expediency, Radiger, the prince, married his father's widow, his step-mother, because she was sister of Theodbert the Franc. The rejected East Anglian would not brook the indignity; she demanded revenge for the slight, because in the estimation of her countrymen the purity of female chastity was sullied if the maiden once wooed was not wedded. Her brother and the East Anglian

[1] The Editor of the great collection des Historiens des Gaules, Paris, 1741, remarks (referring to Valesius), that Procopius erred when he placed the Varni on the right bank of the Rhine, and that he is more credible when he places them nearer the Danes, vol. ii. p. 42.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

warriors thought her quarrel just; a large fleet sailed from England under her auspices, and landed
547. on the Rhine. A part of the army encamped round her; the rest, with one of her brothers, defeated the Varni, and penetrated the country. Radiger fled. The Angles returned to the lady, glorying in their victory. She received them with disdain. They had done nothing, as they had not brought Radiger to her feet. Again her selected champions sallied forth, and Radiger at last was taken in a wood. The captive entered her tent, to receive his doom. But the heart of the East Anglian was still his own. He pleaded his father's commands, and the solicitations of his chiefs. The conquering beauty smiled forgiveness. To accept her hand, and to dismiss her rival, was the only punishment she awarded. Joyfully the prince obeyed, and the sister of Theodbert was repudiated.[2]

617. THIS event is the only one in the history of East Anglia which can interest our notice until the reign of Redwald. Before this prince it had arrogated no dominating precedence in England. The intemperate ambition of Ethelfrith propelled it into consequence. This king of the Northumbrian Angles, dissatisfied with his inherited Bernicia, and his trophies in Scotland and Wales, invaded Deira, to which Edwin the son of Ella, at the age of three years, had succeeded; and by expelling the little infant, converted the Saxon states in England into an hexarchy. Edwin was carried

Ethelfrith seizes Deira.

[2] Procopius Goth. Hist. lib. iv. p. 468—471. Gibbon places this incident between 534 and 547, which were the extreme terms of the reign of Theodbert, vol. iii. c. 38. p. 627.

Digitized by Google

to North Wales, and was generously educated by Cadvan.[3] CHAP. VII. 617.

As Edwin grew up, he was compelled to leave Wales; and for many years wandered about in secret, through various provinces, to escape the unceasing pursuit of Ethelfrith. Reaching East Anglia, he went to the court of Redwald, and avowing himself, besought his hospitable protection. Redwald received him kindly, and promised what he asked. Impatient that Edwin should be alive, Ethelfrith sent repeated messengers, with presents to the East Anglian sovereign, requiring him to surrender the youth, and adding menaces if he refused. Redwald remembered the unvarying successes of Ethelfrith, and fearful of encountering his hostility, promised either the death or the surrender of Edwin. A friend to the young exile discovered his intentions, and counselled him to fly. But Edwin, weary of living like a fugitive, replied, "I cannot do this. I have made a compact with Redwald, and I will not be the first to break it, while he has done me no evil, nor has yet discovered any enmity. If I am to perish, he that betrays or destroys me will be disgraced, not myself. And whither should I fly, who have been wandering already so long, through so many provinces of Britain, without a shelter? How can I escape elsewhere the toils of my persecutor?" His friend left him. Edwin remained sitting before the palace, reflecting on his misfortunes and darkening projects. In this anxious state night approached, and he believed he saw an unknown

Edwin in East Anglia.

[3] Alured Beverl. lib. vi. p. 90. Redwald was son of Titel, and grandson of Uffa. Fl. Wig. 233.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 617.

person advance to him, who promised him present deliverance and great future prosperity, if he should listen to what would be afterwards taught him. The vision laid his hand on his head, and, adjuring him to remember this interview, disappeared[4]; or else Edwin waked. But he had a more substantial friend than the apparition of a dream.

Redwald protects him, and defeats Ethelfrith.

THE queen of Redwald secretly pleaded for the youthful exile, and with noble sentiments: "A king should not sell a distressed friend, nor violate his faith for gold: no ornament is so ennobling as good faith." Interested by her intercession, and inspired with her fortitude, Redwald resolved to keep sacred the duties of hospitality; and Edwin was informed by his watchful, though unknown, friend of the generous determination.

THE preparations of Ethelfrith, disappointed of his prey, compelled him to arm; Redwald acted with judicious vigour; and he attacked Ethelfrith, before he had collected all his troops, on the east bank of the Idel in Nottinghamshire.[5] The Northumbrian king, by his experienced valour and veteran soldiers, supplied the disparity of his troops, and balanced the contest. The East Anglians advanced in three divisions; one of these, Rainer, the son of Redwald, led. The ancient fortune of Ethelfrith befriended him; he attacked this wing, and the prince and his warriors were destroyed. This disaster only stimulated Redwald to more determined exertions; he still outnumbered his opponent, and his other divisions were firm. Ethelfrith, unused to such resistance, and impatient for the event, rushed on the East Anglians

[4] Bede, lib. ii. c. 12. [5] Ibid.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

with a dangerous impetuosity. His friends did not follow his injudicious courage; he was separated from them, and perished among the swords of the surrounding East Anglians.[6] Edwin also signalised himself. Redwald not only re-instated him in Deira, but enabled him to subject Bernicia to his power. Thus the hexarchy continued. The sons of the slain usurper fled into Scotland[7], where they imbibed Christianity. Redwald ascended to the national pre-eminence which Ella, Ceawlin, and Ethelbert had possessed under the title of the Bretwalda; and, on his death it was assumed by Edwin.[8]

617. Ethelfrith falls.

Edwin restored.

THE three brothers who governed Essex perished in a conflict with the West[9] Saxons. Redwald was succeeded in East Anglia by Eorpwald. Redwald, during a visit to Ethelbert in Kent, had adopted Christianity for his religion; but returning to his own country, his wife and the East Anglian priests opposing his impressions, he attempted to unite it with the Saxon idolatry. He built an altar to Christ in the same temple where the sacrifices to Odin were performed.[10] But even this strange combination of worship had the effect of drawing the attention of his East Anglians to the Christian faith.

623.

THE vicissitudes of Edwin's life had endued his mind with a contemplative temper, which made him more intellectual than any of the Anglo-Saxon

[6] Hunting. lib. ii. p. 316. Sax. Chron. 27.
[7] Sax Chron. 27. Bede, lib. iii. c. 1. Polychron. 3 Gale, 229.
[8] Bede, lib. ii. c. 5. [9] Ibid. Flor. Wig. 231.
[10] Ibid. lib. ii. c. 15. This altar, Bede says, lasted to the time of Aldulf, the King of East Anglia, his contemporary, who mentioned that he had seen it when a boy.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

kings that had preceded him, and which fitted him for the reception of Christianity. His progress towards this revolution of mind was gradual, and the steps have been clearly narrated by his countryman Bede.

623. He solicited in marriage Tata Edilberga, the daughter of Ethelbert in Kent. Her brother, who had abandoned his idolatry, objected to her alliance with a worshipper of Odin. Edwin promised that he would not interfere with her religion, but would allow the free exercise of it both to herself and her friends. He also intimated that if, on the examination of it by his wise men, it was found to be more holy and worthier of God than his native faith, he might himself adopt it. The Saxon princess became his wife, and Paulinus, one of those whom Gregory had last selected to assist Augustin, went with her as her priest and bishop.[11]

625. The first care of Paulinus was to prevent the queen and the noble persons in her train from relapsing into their idolatry. His next, to convert some of the natives; but they were impenetrable to his exertions. Odin continued still to be their favourite.

At this period the life of Edwin was attacked by an assassin. Cwichhelm, the pagan king of Wessex, commissioned one of his subjects to visit Edwin's court, and watch his opportunity to stab him with a poisoned dagger. The wretch reached the royal residence on the Derwent, and introduced himself as a messenger from his king. Edwin was then about to be made a father by his

[11] Bede, lib. ii. c. 9.

Digitized by Google

queen. The name of Cwichhelm procured an immediate admission for the intended assassin, who had abilities and firmness sufficient to begin the delivery of a fictitious message, when suddenly starting up, he clenched his weapon and rushed upon the king. The attack was so sudden that Edwin was off his guard, and defenceless; but a thegn to whom he was greatly attached, Lilla, was near him: he saw the rising dagger and Edwin's danger; he had no shield; but with the impulse of a generous heart he threw himself before his king, and received in his own body the blow, which it was impossible to avert. So vehement was the stroke that it went through Lilla and slightly wounded the king. The swords of the attendants were instantly drawn upon the murderer; but he stood on his defence, and was not hewn down till he had stabbed another knight with the weapon which he had withdrawn from his first victim's [12] body.

625.

On this same night the queen was delivered of her daughter Eanfleda. The king thanked his idols for her birth; and when Paulinus directed his attention to the Christian Saviour, Edwin, like Clovis, who had established in France the kingdom of the Francs, promised that he would adopt the faith of the Bishop, if heaven should give victory to his arms against the king, who had sent the assassin to destroy him. As a pledge of his own determination to fulfil this engagement, he consented to the baptism of the new-born babe.

Eleven others of the household at the same time received the Christian rite.[13]

[12] Bede, lib. ii. c. 9. Fl. Wig. 232.
[13] Bede, lib. ii. c. 9. Fl. Wig. 232. Sax. Chron. 27.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

625. Introduction of Christianity into Northumbria.

EDWIN assembled his forces and advanced against Cwichhelm. His expedition was successful. But on his return from his victory into Northumbria[14], he delayed to embrace the new religion. He had become dissatisfied with his idols, but he was of that class of mind, which requires the conviction of its reason before it decides on its belief. He conferred long and anxiously with Paulinus on the subject, and with his wisest nobles. He was seen frequently sitting alone, discussing with himself what he ought to do, and to which religion he should adhere.[15] In these deliberations a letter reached him from Pope Boniface, exhorting him to abandon useless and insensible idols, who of themselves could not even change their locality; but if not moved by others, must, like a stone, remain for ever where they were. The pontiff told him he had a living spirit within him, of which they were destitute, which would survive the dissolution of his body; and added, "Come then to the knowledge of Him who has created you; who has breathed into you this spirit of life; and who has sent his Son to redeem you from sin and every evil power; and to reward you with all the blessings of his heavenly world." [16]

BONIFACE at the same time sent an epistle to his queen, reminding her of the duty of interesting her husband with Christianity; and urging her to

[14] Sax. Chron. 28.

[15] Bede, lib. ii. c. 9. The feelings which a respectable Hindoo of Delhi expressed in 1826 to the Christian missionary there, may perhaps illustrate the state of Edwin's mind, at this period, on this momentous subject. "I say truly, that I have a love for the things contained in your books; but I have little faith yet: when I have more faith, I will say more to you." Miss. Reg. Feb. 1827, p. 82.

[16] Bede, lib. ii. c. 10.

Digitized by Google

soften his prepossessions against it, and to impress upon his senses the excellence of the faith she had adopted, and the admirable nature of its future rewards. [17] CHAP. VII. 625.

THESE letters were received and considered; but Paulinus found that the loftiness of the king's mind, and the natural pride of the Anglo-Saxon nation, could not be easily brought to stoop to the humility and gentleness of the Christian precepts. [18] In this juncture he appears to have come to the knowledge of the king's dream at the court of Redwald, and he made an ingenious use of it.

THE vision at its departure was said to have laid its right hand on the king's head, and to have exclaimed: "When this sign is repeated, remember this conference, and perform your promise of obeying what will then be disclosed to you."

PAULINUS, without appearing to have had any previous knowlege of this dream, one day entered the king's apartment as he was pursuing his meditations on the opposing religions; and advancing with a solemn air, imitated the action of the imaginary figure, and placed his right hand on his sovereign's head, at the same time asking him if he remembered that sign.

THE king's sensibility was instantly affected. His dream and promise rushed upon his mind. He did not pause to consider that Paulinus might, from his queen or his intimate friends, have become acquainted with his own account of his believed vision. All seemed supernatural, and Paulinus to be the actual vision that had addressed him. He threw himself at the bishop's feet, who, pursuing

[17] Bede, lib. ii. c. 11. [18] Ibid. c. 12.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

625. the impression which he had excited, raised him, and exhorted him to lose no time to fulfil his thrice-repeated engagement; and reminded him that this, alone, would deliver him from the eternal evils of disobedience.[19]

THE king, now seriously affected by the important question, summoned his witena-gemot, that, if they participated in his feelings, all might be baptised together. When they met, he proposed the new worship for the subject of their deliberations, and required each to express his feelings without reserve.

COIFI, the high priest of their idols, as the first in rank, addressed, and unless the coarseness of his mind was that of the country, must have surprised the king. His speech, from the singularity of the criterion by which he governed the faint moral feeling he possessed, deserves a literal translation. "You see, O king! what is now preached to us. I declare to you most truly what I have most certainly experienced, that the religion which we have hitherto professed contains no virtue at all, and as little utility. No one of all your court has been more attentive than I have been to the worship of our gods; and yet many have received far richer benefits, far greater honours, and have prospered more in all that men transact or pursue, than I have. But if these gods had been of any real worth, would they not in preference have assisted me who have never neglected them?[20] If

[19] Bede, lib. ii. c. 12.

[20] This seems a natural strain of reason with the priests of idols when they choose to express their opinions; and, perhaps also, of many others; for at Benares, as Mr. Smith wrote to England, "I asked a Brahmin why they took no notice of some stone gods lying under a

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

625.

then, on due enquiry, you shall perceive that these new things which are preached to us will be better and more efficacious, let us hasten to adopt them without any delay."

THIS effusion of self-interest would lead one to suspect that the effects of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Romanised and Christianised Britain, and of the civilisation, luxuries, and mental cultivation which it had, to a certain extent, exhibited to the Saxon eye, had already shaken their attachment to the rude superstitions of their ancestors; or the high priest of their national deities would not have, so feelingly, expatiated on his comparative neglect. This circumstance will contribute to account for the ease with which Christianity was established in the island.

THE next speaker discovered a mind unusually enlarged for a people hitherto so unaccustomed to intellectual investigations.

"THE present life of man, O king! seems to me, if compared with that after-period which is so uncertain to us, to resemble a scene at one of your wintry feasts. As you are sitting with your ealdormen and thegns about you, the fire blazing in the center, and the whole hall cheered by its warmth; and while storms of rain and snow are raging without, a little sparrow flies in at one door, roams around our festive meeting, and passes out at some other entrance. While it is among us, it feels not the wintry tempest. It enjoys the short comfort and serenity of its transient stay; but

wall?" "We worshipped them several years," answered the Brahmin, "but not deriving any benefit, we laid them aside, knowing they are but stones, and are not able to do good or evil." Miss. Reg. p. 78.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

625.

then, plunging into the winter from which it had flown, it disappears from our eyes. Such is here the life of man. It acts and thinks before us; but, as of what preceded its appearance among us we are ignorant, so are we of all that is destined to come afterwards. If, then, on this momentous future, this new doctrine reveals any thing more certain or more reasonable, it is my opinion entitled to our acquiescence." [21]

THE other witena and the royal counsellors exhibited similar dispositions. Coifi desired to hear from Paulinus an exposition of the Deity. The bishop obeyed, and the Angle priest exclaimed, "Formerly I understood nothing that I worshipped. The more I contemplated our idolatry, the less truth I found in it. But this new system I adopt without hesitation; for truth shines around it, and presents to us the gifts of eternal life and blessedness. Let us then, O king! immediately anathematise and burn the temples and altars which we have so uselessly venerated." On this bold exhortation, he was asked who would be the first to profane the idols and their altars, and the inclosures with which they were surrounded. The

[21] Bede, lib. ii. c. 13. Alfred's translation of this interesting speech presents it to us as near to its original form as we can now obtain it: — "Thýrlic me ꝼ ȝeꝼrepen, Cýninȝ! thiꝼ anbpanbe liꝼ manna on eopthan, to ꝼichmetenýꝼꝼe thæꝼe tibe the uꝼ uncuth ꝼ, ꝼpa ȝelic, ꝼþa thu æt ꝼpæꝼenbum ꝼitte mið thinum ealbopmannum ȝ thezhum on pinteꝼ tibe ȝ ýꝼ ýꝼ onæleb, ȝ ðin heall ȝepýhmeb. ȝ hit þine ȝ ꝼniþe ꝼtýþine ute. Cume ðonne an ðpeanpa ȝ hpæblice þ huꝼ ðuþh ꝼleo ȝ cume ðuþh opþe ðupu inn ðuþh opþe ut ȝepite·· Ðpet he on ða tið ðe he inne biþ ne biþ hþineb mið þý ꝼtopme ðæꝼ pintpeꝼ. ac þ biþ an eazan bþihýtm ȝ þ læꝼte pæt. ac he ꝼona oꝼ pintþa in pinteþ eꝼt cýmeþ·· Spa ðonne ðiꝼ monna liꝼ to mebmýclum pæce tætýpeh, hpæt ðæþ ꝼopeȝanȝe. opþe hpæt ðæþ æꝼtetꝼýliȝe pe ne cunnon·· Foꝼþon ȝiꝼ þeoꝼ nipe læþ opihte cuþliche ȝ ȝepiꝼenliche bpinȝe. heo ðæꝼ pýnthe ꝼ þ pe ðæne ꝼýliȝean·· " P. 516.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

625.

zealous convert answered, "I will: as I have led the way in adoring them through my folly, I will give the example of destroying them in obedience to that which I have now received from the true God." He requested of the king weapons and a war-horse. It was a maxim of their ancient religion, that no priest should carry arms, or ride on any horse but a mare; — an interesting rule, to separate the ministers of their religion from the ferocity of war. The priest girded on a sword, and, brandishing a spear, mounted the king's horse, and rode to the idol temple. The people, without, thought him mad. He hurled his spear against the temple to profane it, and then commanded his companions to destroy all the building and its surrounding inclosures. The scene of this event was a little to the east of York, beyond the river Derwent, at a place, in Bede's time, called Godmunddingaham. [22]

[22] Bede, c. 13. It is still called Godmundham, or the home of the mund, or protection of the gods. The effect of these sudden acts of desecrating the great scenes or objects of idolatrous veneration has been recently witnessed in Owhyhee. This island, containing 4000 square miles, is one complete mas of lava, and has the largest volcanic crater we know of, being eight miles round. The goddess of fire, Peli, and her subordinate fire gods, are supposed to preside over it, and when offended, to visit mankind with thunder, earthquake, and streams of liquid fire. Fifty cones, of which above twenty continually emitted pyramids of flame and burning matter, riveted the terrified people to the worship of the supposed fiery deities, till Kapiolani, a female chief, having embraced Christianity, resolved to descend into the flaming crater, and to convince the inhabitants of the nullity of the gods they feared, by braving them in their volcanic homes. "If I do not return safe," said the heroic woman, "then continue to worship Peli; but if I come back unhurt, adore the God who created her." Kapiolani went down the steep and difficult side of the crater, and arriving at the bottom, pushed a stick into the liquid lava and stirred the ashes of the burning lake. The charm of superstition was at that moment broken. It was expected that the goddess, armed with flame and sulphureous smoke, would have burst forth and destroyed the impious

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

628.

EDWIN and his nobility were soon afterwards baptised, in the eleventh year of his reign. In 632, he persuaded Eorpwald of East Anglia, the son of Redwald, to imitate his example. Sigebert, the brother and successor of Eorpwald, not only increased the diffusion of Christianity in East Anglia, but applied so closely to the study of it as to be called by the Chronicler, "Most Learned."[23]

EDWIN reached the summit of human prosperity: a considerable part of Wales submitted to his power, and the Menavian islands; and he was the first of the Angles that subdued or defeated all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms but Kent.[24] The in-

Edwin's police.

intruder. But seeing the fire roll as harmlessly as if no one were present, the people "acknowledged the greatness of the God of Kapiolani, and from that time few have been the offerings and little the reverence offered to the fires of Peli." Lord Byron's Voyage to the Sandwich Islands, 1827, p. 188. The missionaries had made no general impression, nor could the king and chiefs subdue the worship, till the rod of Kapiolani thus dissolved the spell.

[23] Doctissimus. Flor. Wig. 233, 234. Analogous to Edwin's conduct in this overthrow of the Saxon superstitions, was that of Riho Riho, king of the Sandwich Islands, in May, 1819, which may be here noticed as illustrating the Northumbrian revolution, and confirming its historical probability, and thereby our Bede's veracity. After several conferences with his nobles on the absurdities of their religion, which the visits of Captain Cook and others, and some American missionaries, had led his father's mind and his own to perceive, he declared his resolution, if the chiefs consented, to desecrate their sacred morais, and to destroy their idols. His mother enquired, "What harm their gods had done?" "Nay," answered the nobles, "what good? Are not the offerings we are required to make, burdensome? Are not the human sacrifices demanded by the priests, cruel and useless! Do not the foreigners laugh at our supposing these ill-shaped logs of wood can protect us?" The maternal queen replied, "Do as you will;" and on the same day their consecrated places and images were destroyed, and Christianity was soon after introduced into these interesting islands. See Ellis's Narrative, and Lord Byron's Voyage, for the fuller details.

[24] Flor. Wig. 233. Sax. Chron. 27. Bede, ii. c. 9. and 16. The Menavian Islands were Eubonia and Mona, or Man and Anglesey.—

Digitized by Google

ternal police which prevailed through his dominions was so vigilant, that it became an aphorism to say, that a woman, with her new-born infant, might walk from sea to sea without fear of insult. As in those days travelling was difficult and tedious, and no places existed for the entertainment of guests, it was an important and kind convenience to his people, that he caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring, with brazen dishes chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced. In another reign these would have been placed only to have been taken away; but such was the dread of his inquiring justice, or such the general affection for his virtues, that no man misused them. It is remarked by Bede, as an instance of his dignity and power, that his banner was borne before him whenever he rode out, either in peace or war. When he walked abroad, the tufa preceded him.[25] CHAP. VII. 628.

His prosperity and its change.

For seventeen years he reigned, victorious over his enemies, and making his subjects happy. But Edwin, with all his merit, was an imperfect character. He had admitted Christianity to his belief, but he was forty-three years old before he had adopted it. His mind and temper had therefore

Bede, c. 9., states that Anglesey contained 960 hydes or families, and Man 300. The fertility of Anglesey occasioned the proverb, Mon mam Cymry; Mona the mother of Wales. Pryse's Pref. to Wynne's Caradoc. — The king of Gwynedd had his royal seat in it at Aberfraw, which is now a small village. Camp. Reg. 1796, p. 402.

[25] We know, from a passage of Vegetius, corrected by Lipsius, that the tufa was one of the Roman ensigns; and we are informed by Isidorus, that Augustus introduced a globe upon a spear among his signa, to denote a subjected world. Lipsius is of opinion that this was the tufa alluded to by Bede. — De Militia Romana, lib. iv. c. 5. p. 169. ed. Antwerp, 1598.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

628.

been formed into other habits before he allowed the new faith to affect him. He was still the Saxon warrior, and partook of the fate which so many experienced from their martial character. Five years had not elapsed after his conversion before his reign was ended violently; and the disaster resulted from his ambition. The tender years of his life had been cherished by the father of Cadwallon, the sovereign of North Wales; but when Edwin had obtained the sceptre of Ethelfrith, he waged furious war with the son of his host. We know neither what had caused him, when young, to leave his asylum in Wales, nor what occasioned now the hostility between him and Cadwallon. But as the Welsh king invaded Edwin, we may presume him to have been the aggressor. Edwin defeated Cadwallon, who had penetrated to Widdrington, about eight miles north of Morpeth.[26] It is with regret we read that he was not satisfied with defensive war, and did not forbear to use the rights of victory against his early friend and protector. He obeyed his resentment or his ambition in preference to his gratitude. He pursued Cadwallon into Wales, and chased him into Ireland.[27] So severely did he

His conduct to Cadwallon and Wales.

[26] Jeffry's account of the quarrel is, that Edwin wished to wear his crown independently of the Welsh prince, who was advised to insist on his subjection, and threatened to cut off his head if he dared to crown it. Lib. xii. c. 2, 3.

[27] The 34th Triad states, that Cadwallon and his family lived seven years in Ireland, p. 7.—Jeffry annexes a pretty nurse tale to Cadwallon's exile. Sailing to Armorica, he was driven by a tempest on the island of Garnereia: the loss of his companions affected him to sickness; for three days he refused food, on the fourth he asked for venison; a day's search discovered none. To save his king, Brian cut an ample piece out of his own thigh, roasted it on a spit, and presented it to the king as genuine venison. It was greedily devoured. The wind changed, they got safe to Armorica, and Brian afterwards killed the second-sighted magician of Edwin. Lib. xii. c. 4. and 7.

Digitized by Google

exercise his advantages, that the British Triads characterise him as one of the three plagues which befel the Isle of Anglesey.[28]

633.

For a few years his authority continued over Gwynedd. But this apparent triumph only flattered him into ruin. Cadwallon besought the aid of Penda, the Mercian king, who armed in his cause with all the activity of youth. The confederated kings met Edwin in Hatfield Chase in Yorkshire, on the 12th of October. As Mercia until that time had been obscure and tranquil, and an appendage to his kingdom of Deira, Edwin had no reason to apprehend any danger from this union. But the end of all battles is uncertain: the death of a commander; the mistake of a movement; a sudden unforeseen attack on some part; a skilful, even at times an accidental, evolution, has frequently made both talent and numbers unavailing. The detail of this conflict has not been transmitted, but its issue was calamitous to Edwin. He fell in his forty-eighth year, with one of his children; and most of his army perished.[29]

Cadwallon and Penda unite.

Edwin's fate.

The victors ravaged Northumbria; the hoary Penda exercised peculiar cruelty on the Christian inhabitants. Consternation overspread the

[28] Matt. West. 224., in his Combustis Urbibus et Colonis destructis, explains the direful scourge.

[29] Osfrid fell before his father. Bede, lib. ii. c. 20. Sax. Chron. 29. Gibson and Carte place the battle in Hatfield Chase. Langhorn prefers Hethfield, in Derbyshire, near Cheshire, 176.; others, more absurdly, have glanced on Hatfield, in Herts. Near the Yorkshire town many intrenchments are to be seen. I will not aver that rats shun the town, or that the sparrows are displeased with Lindham in the moors below it. Gibson's Add. to Camden, 725.—The men of Powys so distinguished themselves in this battle, that they obtained from Cadwallon a boon of fourteen privileges. The Welsh call the scene of conflict Meigin. Cynddelw, cited in Owen's Llywarch, p. 117.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

633.

country. The royal widow fled in terror, under the protection of Paulinus, and a valiant soldier, with some of her children, to her kinsman in Kent.[30]

Cadwallon's successes.

On Edwin's death, the ancient divisions of Northumbria again prevailed, and an heptarchy reappeared. His cousin Osric, the grandson of Ella, succeded to Deira; and Eanfrid, the long exiled son of Ethelfrith, to Bernicia: both restored paganism, though Osric had been baptised. The Welsh king Cadwallon, full of projects of revenge against the nation of the Angles, continued his war. Osric rashly ventured to besiege him in a strong town[31], but an unexpected sally of Cadwallon destroyed the king of Deira. For a year the victor desolated Northumbria: his success struck Eanfrid with terror, and his panic hurried him to his fate. He went with twelve soldiers to sue peace of the Welshman. Notwithstanding the sacred purpose of his visit, he was put to death.

The swords of Cadwallon and his army seemed the agents destined to fulfil their cherished prophecy. The fate of the Anglo-Saxons was now about to arrive; three of their kings had been already offered up to the shades of the injured Cymry; an Arthur had revived in Cadwallon.—

[30] Eadbald received them honourably, and made Paulinus Bishop of Rochester. Bede, lib. ii. c. 20. Sax. Chron. 29. He gave her the villam maximam Lininge (Liming) cum omnibus adjacentibus, in which she built a monastery. Hugo. Candid. Cænob. Burg. Hist. p. 37. ed Sparke. She exhibited a novelty to the English, which produced serious consequences. She took the veil. Smith's Notes on Bede, 101. The hospitality of Eadbald seems not to have been unchequered; her apprehension of him and Oswald induced her to send her children to France, to Dagobert, their relation. Bede, c. 20.

[31] Bede, lib. iii. c. 1. The town was a municipium, and was therefore in all probability York. Smith's Notes on Bede, 103.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

But the lying prophecies of hope, and human augury, have been the experience and the complaint of ages, and are never more fallacious than in ambition and war. 633.

TRIUMPHANT with the fame of fourteen great battles and sixty skirmishes[32], Cadwallon despised Oswald, the brother and successor of Eanfrid, who rallied the Bernician forces, and attempted to become the deliverer of his country. With humble confidence the royal youth committed his cause to the arbitration of Providence[33], and calmly awaited the decision on the banks of the Denise.[34] There, Cadwallon[35] and the flower of his army were destroyed. The return of the Cymry to their ancient country never became probable again.[36] 634. Oswald defeats him.

[32] Llywarch Hen. p. 111.

[33] The piety of Oswald previous to the battle is expressed by Bede. To his arrayed army he loudly exclaimed: "Let us kneel to the Omnipotent Lord, the existing and the true, and unite to implore his protection against a fierce and arrogant enemy. He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our people."—The army obeyed the royal mandate. Lib. iii. c. 2.

[34] Camden places this battle at Dilston, formerly Devilston, on a small brook which empties into the Tyne, 854., Gib. ed.—Smith, with greater probability, marks Erringburn as the rivulet on which Cadwallon perished, and the fields either of Cockley, Hallington, or Bingfield, as the scene of conflict. App. to Bede, 721. The Angles called it Hefenfield, which name, according to tradition, Bingfield bore.

[35] Although Jeffry admits Oswald to have conquered at Havenfield, yet he has sent Penda to be the person defeated there; and instead of suffering his Cadwallon to perish, inflames him with rage at the disaster, and despatches him like lightning in chase of Oswald, whom he permits Penda to kill; Cadwallon then became possessed of all Britain. Lib. xii. c. 10, 11. Such is the veracity of Jeffry's history!

[36] The ancient bard Llywarch Hen. composed in his old age an elegy on Cadwallon, whose death he lived to witness; and thus speaks of his friend:—

> Fourteen great battles he fought
> For Britain, the most beautiful;
> And sixty skirmishes.

Digitized by Google

Of Lloegyr (England)
The scourge and the oppressor,
His hand was open;
Honour flowed from it.

Cadwallon encamped on the Yddon,
The fierce affliction of his foes.
The lion, prosperous against the Saxons.

Cadwallon in his fame encamped
On the top of Mount Digoll:
Seven months, and seven skirmishes daily.

He led the hand of slaughter in the breach;
Eagerly he pursued the conflict;
Stubborn in an hundred battles,
A hundred castles he threw down.

He made the eagles full;
Violent his wrath in the gash;
As the water flows from the fountain,
So will our sorrow through the lingering day,
For Cadwallon!

Welsh Arch. i. p. 121.; and Owen's Llywarch, p. 111—117.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

The Reign, Actions, and Death of PENDA.—*History of the* ANGLO-SAXON *Octarchy to the Accession of* ALFRED *of* NORTHUMBRIA.

CHAP. VIII.

A.D. 627—634. Rise of Penda.

ABOUT this time the kingdom of Mercia was not only distinctly formed, but, by the extraordinary ability of one man, was at the same time raised to a greater eminence in the Saxon octarchy than any of its preceding kings, even those who had become Bretwaldas, had actually obtained. This man was Penda, who, though not classed among the Bretwaldas, would, if victory over the other Anglo-Saxon states had given the dignity, have possessed it more rightfully than any other. It has been mentioned that several petty adventurers of the Angles had successively penetrated into the inland districts, which became comprised in the kingdom of Mercia, aud established settlements among the Britons in these regions. In 586, one of them, name Crida, also a descendant of Woden, began to attain a regal pre-eminence[1]; but as we may infer from an intimation of Nennius, that Penda first separated Mercia from the kingdom of the northern Angles, Crida must have been in subordination to the kingdom of Deira, which formed its

[1] Crida is the first Mercian chief that is mentioned in the documents which remain to us, with the title of king. He began to reign in 586. 3 Gale Script. p. 229. Hunt. 315. Lel. Collect. ii. p. 56. Ibid. i. p. 258. Leland, from an old Chronicle, observes, vol. i. p. 211., that the Trent divided Mercia into two kingdoms, the north and the south.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

northern frontier.[2] In 627, Penda, the grandson of Crida, succeeded to the crown at that age, when men are usually more disposed to ease than activity. He was fifty years old before he became the king of Mercia, and he reigned thirty years[3]; but it was to the terror and destruction of several of the other Anglo-Saxon kings. Mercia had neither displayed power nor ability before his accession; but Penda's military talents and uncommon vigour speedily raised it to a decided and overwhelming preponderance. In the year after he attained the crown, we find him in a battle with Cynegils, and his son Cwichelm, in Wessex, at Cirencester. The conflict was undecided during the whole day, and in the ensuing morning the war was ended by a treaty.[4] Five years afterwards, at the age of sixty, he joined Cadwallon, and defeated Edwin of Northumbria, in that battle in which this prince was slain.[5]

634.

Oswald reigns in Northumbria.

THE piety of Oswald was sincere, and influenced his conduct; he obtained a bishop from Icolm-kill to instruct his rude subjects; and he earnestly laboured to advance their moral tuition. His own example strenghened his recommendations on that essential duty, without which all human talents, and all human aggrandisement, are unavailing decorations. In the festival of Easter a silver dish

[2] Nennius, p. 117. "Penda primus separavit regnum Merciorum a regno Nordorum." Ceorl acceded between Crida and Penda. Rad. Polych. p. 229. It was Ceorl's daughter Quenburga that Edwin married in his exile. Bede, lib. ii. c. 14.

[3] Flor. Wig. dates his accession in 627, p. 232. Penda was the eleventh descendant from Woden, by his son Wihtlæg, ibid. and Hunt. 316.

[4] Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. 29. The pacification is mentioned by Flor. Wig. 233.; and Matt. West. 217.

[5] See before, p. 350.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

was laid before him, full of dainties. While the blessing was about to be pronounced, the servant appointed to relieve the poor, informed the king that the street was crowded with the needy, soliciting alms. Struck by the contrast, that while he was feasting with luxury, many of his subjects, beings of feelings, desires, and necessities like his own, were struggling with poverty; remembering the benevolent precepts of Christianity, and obeying the impulse of a kind temper, he ordered the food, untouched, to be given to the supplicants, and the silver dish to be divided among them.[6] The beggar for one instant participated in the enjoyments of a king, and rank was, in that fierce and proud day, admonished to look with compassion on the misery which surrounds it. 634.

Oswald had the satisfaction of perceiving the blessings of Christianity diffused into Wessex. A spirit so lowly and so charitable as his own, must have powerfully felt the beauties of its benign morality. He stood sponsor for Cynegils, who received baptism. The nation followed the example of the king.[7]

642. Slain by Penda.

While Oswald was benefiting his age by a display of those gentle virtues which above all others are fitted to meliorate the human character, the Mercian king was preparing to attack him. His invasion of Northumbria was fatal to the less warlike Oswald, who fell at Oswestry in Shropshire, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the ninth of his reign. Oswald breathed his last sigh in prayer for his friends.[8]

[6] Bede, lib. iii. c. 6. Oswald was Nepos Edwini regis ex sorore Acha, ibid.—As he united Deira and Bernicia, the Saxon states formed, during his reign, an hexarchy.

[7] Bede, lib. iii. c. 7. [8] Ib. c. 9.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

642. As ferocious as he was daring and restless, Penda caused the head and limbs of Oswald to be severed from his body and exposed on stakes.[9] He proceeded through Northumbria with devastations, and finding himself unable to carry the royal city of Bebbanburh by storm, he resolved to destroy it by fire. He demolished all the villages in its vicinity, and encompassing the place with a great quantity of the wood and thatch of the ruins, he surrounded the city with flames. But the wind, which was raising the fiery shower above the city walls, suddenly shifted. The element of destruction, most fatal to man, was driven back from its expected prey on those who had let it loose, and the sanguinary besiegers, in panic or in prudence, abandoned the place.[10] The Northumbrians afterwards made Oswy, the brother of Oswald, their king.

Penda attacks Bebbanburh.

643. PENDA'S next warfare was against Wessex. Cenwalh, the son of Cynegils, had offended him by repudiating his sister. He invaded and expelled him; and Cenwalh was an exile in Wessex for three years, before he could regain his crown.[11]

IN the year after Oswald's death, the victorious Penda turned his arms against East Anglia, then in a state of unambitious and inoffensive tranquillity. But this disposition only tempted the ambition of the Mercian. In this country, Sigebert had succeeded the son of Redwald, whom at one time fearing, he had fled into France for safety, and there

Destroys the kings of East Anglia.

[9] Bede, lib. ii. c. 12. Oswy, his successor, removed and interred them, ibid. But the Saxon Chronicler mentions that his hands were at Bebbanburh in his time, p. 31. They were kept as relics.

[10] Ibid. lib. iii. c. 16.

[11] Ibid. lib. iii. c. 7. Flor. Wig. 237. Sax. Chron. 52.

Digitized by Google

became a Christian, and attached himself to study. Attaining the crown of East Anglia, he founded that school in his dominions, which has not only the distinction of being the first, after that at Canterbury, which the Anglo-Saxons established to teach reading and the literature to which it leads, but also of being supposed to have formed the original germ of the university of Cambridge.[12] Sigebert built also a monastery; and preferring devotion, letters, and tranquillity to state, he resigned his crown to his kinsman Ecgric, who was reigning in a part of East Anglia, assumed the tonsure, and retired into the monastery which he had founded. On Penda's invasion, the East Anglians, fearful lest their reigning monarch should be unequal to repel his superior numbers, drew Sigebert by force from his monastery, and compelled him to head their army, from a belief that it would prosper under the guidance of so good a man. He led them to the shock, but, disclaiming all weapons of destruction, he used only a wand of command. His skill was excelled by the veteran ability of Penda. Both

[12] Bede's account is, that desiring to imitate what he had seen well arranged in Gaul, he instituted, with the help of Felix from Kent, a school in which youth should be instructed in letters. Felix gave him teachers and masters from Kent, lib. iii. c. 18. Dr. Smith has given a copious essay on the question, whether this was the foundation of the university at Cambridge, and preceded that of Oxford in antiquity. He considers himself to have shown "feliciter," that the school of Sigebert was planted at Cambridge; but admits that the posterior account, which Peter Blessensis has left of Joffrid's teaching near Cambridge, after the Norman conquest, is an "objectio validissima," which can hardly be answered. On the whole, he thinks, that if he has not identified the Cambridge university with the school of Sigebert, he has at least shown, that the fables about Alfred's founding Oxford are to be entirely rejected. App. No. 14. p. 721—740.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

the East-Anglian princes fell, and their army was dispersed.[13]

654. THE ambition and the success of Penda were not yet terminated. In 654, he marched into East Anglia, against Anna, the successor of Sigebert and Ecgric, and destroyed him.[14] His crime was unpardonable in the eyes of Penda. He had hospitably received Cenwalch.[15]

Oswy. IN that warlike age, when every man was a soldier, no conquest was permanent, no victor secure. Penda lived to exhibit an instance of this truth. When Oswy assumed the government of Bernicia on the death of Oswald, he placed Oswin, son of Osric, the kinsman of the applauded Edwin, over Deira. Oswin, of a tall and graceful stature, distinguished himself for his humanity and generosity, but could not allay the jealousy of Oswy, who soon became eager to destroy the image he had set up. Oswin shrunk from a martial conflict, and concealed himself, with one faithful soldier, Tondhere, his foster-brother, in the house of Earl Hunwald, his assured friend. This man betrayed him to Oswy, and suffered him to be murdered.[16] Oswin had given to his betrayer the possessions he enjoyed. The soldiers of Oswy, whom he guided, entered the house in the night. Tondhere offered himself to their fury, to save his lord and friend; but had only the consolation to perish with him.[17]

Oswin killed.

[13] Bede, lib. iii. c. 18.

[14] Flor. Wig. 240. Sax. Chron. 23. Anna was the son of Eni, of royal descent. His brother Adelhere acceded on Anna's fall; but in his second year was slain by the army of Oswy. The third brother, Edewold, a pious prince, succeeded. On his death, Adulph, the son of Anna, was crowned. Hist. Elien. MSS. Cott. Lib. Nero. A. 15.; and 1 Dugdale, 88.

[15] Bede, lib. iii. cap. 18. and c. 7.

[16] Ibid. lib. iii. c. 14.

[17] Dugd. Mon. i. 333.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

Oswy was, however, destined to free the Anglo-Saxon octarchy from Penda. When this aged tyrant was preparing to invade his dominions, he sued long and earnestly for peace in vain. At the age of eighty, the pagan chief, encouraged by his preceding successes, still courted the chances and the tumult of battle. Rejecting the negotiations repeatedly offered, he hastened with the veterans whom he had long trained, to add Oswy to the five monarchs whose funeral honours recorded him as their destroyer. With trembling anxiety Oswy met him, with his son Alfred, and a much inferior force; but the battle is not always given to the strong, nor the race to the swift. Penda had filled up the measure of his iniquities, and Providence released the country from a ruler, whose appetite for destruction age could not diminish. He rushed into the battle with Oswy confident of victory, but the issue was unexpectedly disastrous to him. Penda, with thirty commanders, perished before the enemy, whose greatest strength they had subdued, and whose present feebleness they despised. The plains of Yorkshire witnessed the emancipation of England.[18] Oidilwald, the son of Oswald, was with the forces of Penda, but not desirous to assist him. When the battle began, he withdrew from the conflict, and waited calmly for the event in a distant position. This secession may have produced a panic among the troops of Penda, or by occupying the jealous attention of part of them,

655.

Penda's fate.

[18] Sax. Chron. 33. Bede, lib. iii. c. 24. Winwidfield, near Leeds, was the theatre of the conflict. Camden, Gib. 711.—Bede does not explicitly assert that Penda had three times the number of forces, but that it was so reported.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

655. diminished the number which acted against Oswy. The principal leaders of the Mercians fell in defending Penda, and the country happening to be overflowed, more perished by the waters than by the sword.

By the death of Oswin the hexarchy returned; by the death of Penda, a pentarchy appeared; for the kingdom of Mercia was so weakened by the result of this battle, that it fell immediately into the power of Oswy, who conquered also part of Scotland.

Penda, during his life, had appointed one of his sons, Peada, to be king of that part of his dominions and conquests which were called Middle Angles; a youth of royal demeanour and great merit. Peada had visited Oswy in Northumbria, and solicited his daughter, Alchfleda, in marriage. To renounce his idols, and embrace Christianity, was made the condition of her hand. As his father was such a determined supporter of the ancient Saxon superstition, and was of a character so stern, the princess must have inspired her suitor with an ardent affection to have made him balance on the subject. Peada submitted to hear the Christian preachers; and their three great topics, the resurrection, the hope of future immortality, and the promise of a heavenly kingdom, inclined him to adopt the religion which revealed them. The persuasions of Alfred, the eldest and intelligent brother of the princess, who had married his sister Cyneburga, completed the impression. He decided to embrace Christianity, even though Alchfleda should be refused to him. He was baptised with all his earls and knights, who had attended him, and with their families, and took four priests home with him

Peada introduces Christianity into Mercia.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

655.

to instruct his people.[19] The Saxon mind appears to have then reached that state of activity and judgment, which had become dissatisfied with its irrational idolatry, and was thus become fitted to receive the belief of Christianity, as soon as it could be influenced to attend steadily to this interesting and enlightening religion. The exertions of the ecclesiastics were successful. Every day, many Mercians, both nobles and laity, were converted.

THE mind of Penda himself had seemed at last to lessen its aversion to the new faith before his fall. He allowed it to be preached in his own dominions to those who chose to hear it; and he took a fair distinction on the subject. He permitted them to believe, if they practised what they were taught. He is stated to have hated and despised those who adopted Christianity, but did not perform its injunctions; exclaiming that those miserable creatures were worthy only of contempt, who would not obey the God in whom they believed. This important revolution of opinions occurred to Mercia about two years before Penda's death.[20] His character was violent and ambitious, but his mind was strong, decided, and of a superior energy. If literature and Christianity had improved it, his talents would have placed him high among the most applauded of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

PENDA'S death led to the complete conversion of Mercia. Oswy, after his victory, reigned three

[19] Bede, lib. iii. c. 21. The names of the four priests were, Cidd, Adda, Betti, and Diuma. The three first were Angles, the last an Irishman, ibid.

[20] Ibid. lib. iii. c. 21.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 655.

years over it, and gave to his son-in-law Peada the sovereignty of the Southern Mercians, whom the Trent divided from the Northern. To read that Mercia beyond the Trent contained but seven thousand families, and in its other part only five thousand[21], leads us to the opinion, that its successes under Penda had not arisen from the numbers of its population, but rather from his great military abilities and powerful capacity. From his reign it advanced with a steady and rapid progress. Christianity spread through it with great celerity after Penda's death. Its two first bishops were Irishmen; and the third, though born an Angle, was educated in Ireland.

His assassination.

In the spring after his father's death, Peada was assassinated at his Easter festival; and the report preserved by the chroniclers states, that it was from the treachery of his queen.[22] Another tradition, but of slender authority, ascribes it to the arts of her mother, who was still a pagan.[23] It may have arisen from the resentments of those who lamented the fall of the ancient idolatry, which Peada had first subverted in Mercia. He had laid

[21] Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

[22] SoBede, c. 24.; Sax. Chron. 33.; and Malmsb. p. 27. It is not uninteresting to read how characteristically an ancient monk expresses the incident. "The enemy of the human race instigated against him *that nature*, by which he deprived us of the joys of Paradise; to wit, his wife Alfleda, who betrayed and slew him." Hug. Cand. p. 4. The Norman Rhimed Chronicle also ascribes the crime to the queen:—

> Alfled la reine engine taunt doluersment,
> Ke ele sun barun tuat par graunt traisement.
>
> Ed. Sparke, 243.

[23] Speed quotes Rob. Swapham to this effect, but I have not met with the passage. The Register of Peterborough, Ap. Dugd. i. p. 63., uses the phrase, indigna et immatura morte, without designating the person, whom Ingulf also omits. Huntingdon has merely, ipso occiso, p. 317.

Digitized by Google

the foundation of the celebrated monastery at Peterborough before he fell, which his brother completed.[24] CHAP. VIII. 655.

THE chieftains of Mercia had submitted to the Northumbrian king with an impatient reluctance. They concealed Wulfhere another of Penda's children, among themselves, till a fit occasion arose of using his name and rights: and after Peada's death, three of them placed Wulfhere at their head, assembled in arms, disclaimed the authority of Oswy, expelled his officers, and made their young leader their king. They succeeded in establishing the independence of their country.[25]

WESSEX now began to emerge into activity and power. Her king, Cenwalch, defeated the Britons, who had imagined, that, after his defeat by Penda, he would prove an easy conquest.[26] Pen in Somersetshire was the place of their conflict: the Britons attacked with an impetuosity that was at first successful, but at length were defeated, and chased, with a slaughter from which they never recovered, to Pedridan on the Parrett.[27] This locality would seem to intimate, that it was the Britons of Cornwall and Devonshire who had principally invaded. Animated by this success, Cenwalch sought to revenge on Mercia and Wulfhere the disgrace which he had suffered from his father. A struggle en- 659. Cenwalch in Wessex.

[24] Chron. Petrib. p. 1. It was called Medeshamstede, because there was a well there named medes-well. Sax. Chron. 33.

[25] Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

[26] Huntingdon, lib. ii. p. 317., et facta est super progeniem Bruti plaga insanabilis in die illa. Ibid.

[27] "Et persecuti sunt eos usque ad locum qui Pederydan nuncupatur." Ethelwerd, p. 836. — So the Saxon Chronicle, hy geflymde oth Pedridan, p. 39. — There is a place on the Parret, in Somersetshire, the entrance of which was called Pedridan muth, perhaps the Aber Peryddon of Golyddan.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

659. sued, in which, after some reverses, the Mercians prevailed, and part of Wessex was subjected to the authority of the Mercian king.[28]

Essex restores Christianity.

Essex about this period restored Christianity, through the instrumentality of Oswy. Sigeberht its king came frequently into Northumbria, and Oswy used to reason with him, that those things could not be gods which the hands of men had made; that wood and stone could not be the materials of which Deity subsisted: these were destroyed by the axe and by fire, or were often subjected to the vilest occasions. As Sigeberht admitted these obvious truths, Oswy described the real object of human worship to be, that Eternal and Almighty Being, to us invisible, and in majesty incomprehensible; yet who had deigned to create the heavens, and the earth, and the human race; who governs what he framed, and will judge the world with parental equity. His everlasting seat was not in perishing metals, but in the heavens; in those regions where he had promised to give endless recompense to those who would study and do the will of their Lord and Maker. The frequent discussion of these topics at length conquered the resisting minds of Sigeberht and his friends. After consulting together, they abandoned their idolatry; and

[28] Matt. West. 216.—The issue of this battle has been differently stated. Ethelwerd, 837., makes Cenwalch take Wulfhere prisoner at Æcesdun, or Aston, near Wallingford, in Berks.—The Saxon Chronicle, 39., and Flor. Wigorn. 241., as far as they express themselves, imply the contrary.—Malmsb. says, the Mercian was at first graviter afflictus by the loss, but afterwards avenged himself, p. 27.—The expressions of Bede, that Wulfhere gave the Isle of Wight and a province in West Saxony to the king of Sussex in one part of his life, lib. iv. c. 13., and that Cenwalch, during Wulfhere's life, was gravissimis regni sui damnis sæpissime ab hostibus adflictus, lib. iii. c. 7., fully countenance the idea, that if Cenwalch at first prevailed, the ultimate triumphs were enjoyed by Wulfhere.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

the king adopted the Christian faith as the religion of Essex.[29]

659.

Sussex embraced the opportunity of Cenwalch's exile to terminate its subordination to Wessex. In 645 Penda had expelled Cenwalch from Wessex; and in 648 we find Edilwalch commencing his reign as king of Sussex.[30] He submitted to the predominance and courted the friendship of Wulfhere; and in 661 received the Isle of Wight, and the Meanwara district in Hampshire, part of the spoils of Wessex, from the bounty of his conqueror. Sussex at this period contained seven thousand families, but remained attached to its idol worship. But Wulfhere persuaded Edilwald to be baptised; and by the exertions of Wilfrid, the bishop most distinguished in his day, the little kingdom, about A.D. 688, exchanged its paganism for Christianity.[31] Essex also submitted afterwards to Wulfhere[32], who became now the most important of the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, though he is not mentioned with the title of Bretwalda, which seems to have been discontinued after this period. Perhaps

[29] Bede, lib. iii. c. 22. This was in 653.

[30] Matt. West. p. 224. mentions the expulsion of Cenwalch. So Flor. Wig. p. 237.—In 648 the exiled monarch returned. Flor. Wig. 238.—In 661, Matt. West. places the 13th year of Aethelwald's reign in Sussex, p. 232.

[31] Bede, lib. iv. c. 13. Sax. Chron. p. 39. The annotator on Bede remarks, that the memorial of this province remains still in the names of the hundreds of Meansborough, Eastmean, Westmean, and Mansbridge, Smith's Bede, p. 155.

[32] Bede, lib. iii. c. 30.—Hugo Candidus names Sigher as the king of Sussex subdued by Wulfhere. Cœnob. Burg. Hist. p. 7. and 8.—This is a misnomer. Sigher reigned with Sebbi in Essex at this period. That Surrey was also in subjection to Wulfhere, appears from a charter in the register of Chertsey Abbey, in which Frithwald, the founder, styles himself "Provinciæ Surrianorum subregulus regis Wlfarii Mercianorum." This was in 666. MSS. Cotton. Lib. Vitel. A. 13. This Frithwald is called King.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

659. the conjecture on this dignity which would come nearest the truth, would be, that it was the walda or ruler of the Saxon kingdoms against the Britons, while the latter maintained the struggle for the possession of the country: a species of Agamemnon against the general enemy, not a title of dignity or power against each other. If so, it would be but the war-king of the Saxons in Britain, against its native chiefs.

670. Oswy's death. Oswy is ranked by Bede, the seventh, as Oswald had been the sixth, of the kings who preponderated in the Anglo-Saxon octarchy.[33] He died in this year.[34] His greatest action was the deliverance of the Anglo-Saxons from the oppressions of Penda; he also subdued the Picts and Scots; but the fate of the amiable Oswin, whom he destroyed, shades his memory with a cloud.[35] Alfred, his eldest son, who had assisted to gain the laurels of his fame in the field of Winwid, was rejected from the succession, for his illegitimacy, and the younger Ecgfrid was placed over the united kingdoms of Northumbria.[36]

672. Saxburga. On the death of Cenwalch, his widow, Saxburga, assumed the sceptre of Wessex. She wielded it with courage and intelligence; she augmented her army with new levies, and encouraged her veterans.

[33] Bede, lib. ii. c. 5. Sax. Chron. p. 7.

[34] Sax. Chron. 40. Chron. Abb. Petri de Burgo, p. 2.

[35] If Oswin's character has not been too favourably drawn, his death was a great loss to his contemporaries. His tall and handsome person was adorned by a disposition unfrequent in his age; affatu jucundus, moribus civilis, omnibus manu largus, regum humilimus, amabilis omnibus. Flor. Wig. 237. To the same purport Bede, lib. iii. c. 14., and Matt. West. 224.

[36] Reprobato notho — factione optimatum quamquam senior. Malms. 20, 21. — Ecgfrid had resided as a hostage with the Mercian queen at the time of Penda's fall. Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

The submissive were rewarded by her clemency; to the enemy a firm countenance was displayed[37]; but the proud barbarians of Wessex disdained even a government of wisdom in the form of a woman[38]; and for ten years the nobles shared the government. In the first part of this interval, Æscuin, son of Cenfusus, a prevailing noble, descended from Cerdic, is mentioned to have ruled.[39] He led a powerful force against Wulfhere, the king of Mercia; a battle, in which the mutual destruction was more conspicuous than the decision, ensued at Bedwin in Wilts. It is worth our while, says the moralizing historian, to observe how contemptible are the glorious wars and noble achievements of the great. Both these contending kings, whose vanity and pomp hurled thousands of their fellow-creatures to their graves, scarcely survived the battle a year.[40] Within a few months Wulfhere died of a natural disease; and in 676 Æscuin followed. Kentwin is denominated his[41] successor; and Ethel-

672.

674. Æscuin.

Kentwin.

[37] Malms. 14. She reigned for one year. Sax. Chron. 41.

[38] "Indignantibus regni magnatibus expulsa est a regno, nolentibus sub sexu fœmineo militare." Matt. West, 236.

[39] There is a seeming contradiction on this point between Bede and the Saxon Chronicle. Bede, lib. iii. c. 12., says, that after Cenwalch's death, acceperunt subreguli regnum gentis, et divisum inter se tenuerunt annis circiter decem. — Flor. Wig., 246., notices this passage, but mentions also the opposite account of the Anglica Chronica. The Saxon Chronicle, after Saxburga's year, places Æscuin in 674, and Kentwin in 676, both within the ten years of Bede, p. 41. 44. I cannot reject the evidence of Bede, who was born at this time. Perhaps Æscuin and Kentwin were the most powerful of the nobles, and being of the race of Cerdic, enjoyed the supremacy. Ina's charter authenticates Kentwin's reign. See it in Malmsb. de Ant. Glast. 3 Gale, 311. Alfred, in his Chronological Fragment, inserted in his Bede, mentions both Æscuin and Kentwin. Walker's Elfred. Mag. App. p. 199.

[40] H. Hunting. p. 318. Sax. Chron. 45.

[41] Sax. Chron. 44. Ethelwerd, 837.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

red, the surviving son of Penda, acceded to the crown of Mercia, and ravaged Kent.[42]

674. Ecgfrid of Northumbria.

ECGFRID, who was governing in Northumbria, had repulsed with great slaughter an invasion of the Picts. Their general, Bernhaeth, fell, and the corses of his followers stopped the current of the river which flowed near the scene of ruin.[43] In 679 Ecgfrid invaded Mercia, though Ethelred had married his sister. The Mercians met him on the Trent, and, in the first battle, his brother Ælfuin fell. More calamitous warfare impended from the exasperation of the combatants, when the aged Theodore interposed. His function of archbishop derived new weight from his character, and he established a pacification between the related combatants. A pecuniary mulct compensated for the fate of Ælfuin, and the retaliation in human blood was prevented.[44]

664. A pestilence.

A DESTRUCTIVE pestilence began to spread through Britain, from its southern provinces to the northern regions, and equally afflicted Ireland, in 664.[45] The calamity extended to Wales, and many of the natives emigrated to Bretagne. Cadwaladyr, the son of Cadwallan, accompanied them. He was kindly received by one of the Breton kings, and partook of his hospitality, till devotion or an aversion to the military vicissitudes of the day, in-

[42] Sax. Chron. 44. The Chronicon of Peterborough dates the invasion of Kent in 677, p. 3.

[43] Malms. Gest. Pontiff. lib. iii. p. 261. Eddius fills two rivers with the bodies, over which the victors passed "siccis pedibus." Vit. Wilf. c. 19. p. 61. ed. Gale.

[44] Bede, lib. iv. c. 21. Malmsb. 20. 28. Sax. Chron. 44. Ecgfrid had conquered Lincolnshire from Wulfhere before Ethelred's accession. Bede, lib. ii. c. 12.

[45] Bede, lib. iii. c. 27

Digitized by Google

duced him to abandon his royal dignity in Wales, and to visit Rome. He was the last of the Cymry who pretended to the sovereignty of the island.[46] CHAP. VIII. 674.

When Cadwaladyr died at Rome, Alan, the king of Bretagne, sent his son Ivor, and his nephew, Inyr, with a powerful fleet, to regain the crown which Cadwaladyr had abandoned or lost. Ivor was at first so successful, that he defeated the Saxons, and took Cornwall, Devonshire, and Somersetshire. But Kentwin met him with the West Saxon power, and chasing him to the sea, again disappointed the hopes of the Cymry.[47] Rodri Maelwynawc assumed the pennaduriaeth, or sovereignty of the Cymry, on Ivor's departure for Rome.[48] 631. 698.

[46] Jeffry, Brit. Hist. lib. xii. c. 17, 18. This work and the Brut. Tysilio and Brut. G. ab Arthur end here. The death of Cadwaladyr is the termination of those British Chronicles which contain the fabled history of Arthur and his predecessors; and they close analogously to their general character; for the voice of an angel is made use of to deter Cadwaladyr, from returning to Britain. The reason added for the celestial interference is, because the Deity did not choose that the Britons should reign in the island before the time predicted by Merlin. The same voice ordered him to Rome, and promised that his countrymen should, from the merit of their faith, again recover the island, when the time foretold was arrived!! Jeffry, lib. xii. c. 17. Brut. Tys. and Brut. Arth. p. 386.

[47] Brut. y Saeson and the Brut. y Tywysoglon, p. 468—470. Sax. Chron. 45. Wynne's History of Wales is not a translation of Caradoc. It is composed from his work, with many additions badly put together.

[48] Brut. y Tywys, p. 471. Dr. Pughe's biographical notice of Cadwaladyr may be read as a good summary of the chief incidents that concern this celebrated Welsh prince. Cadwaladyr, son of Cadwallon ab Cadwan, succeeded to the nominal sovereignty of Britain, in the year 660. Disheartened at the progress of the Saxons, he went to Rome in 686, and died in 703. With him the title of king of the Britons ceased, and such parts as were not conquered by the Saxons were governed by different chiefs, as Stratclyde, Cornwall, and Wales. In the Triads he is styled one of the three princes who wore the golden bands, being emblems of supreme authority, which were worn

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

684. Ecgfrid invades Ireland.

THE restless Ecgfrid soon turned his arms upon Ireland. This nation, although by some of its tribes occasionally at variance with the Welsh, had always continued in strict amity with the English[49]; but this peaceful forbearance was no protection from the avarice of power. Their country was miserably ravaged by Beorht, the Northumbrian general; the lands of Bregh were plundered, and many churches and monasteries were destroyed. The islanders defended their domestic lares with valour, and the Angles retreated.

IT is at this period that Ireland appears to have been conspicuous for the literature of some of her monastic seminaries. Bede states, that many of the noble and middle classes of the English left their country and went to Ireland, either to study the Scriptures or to pass a more virtuous life. Some connected themselves with the monasteries, and preferred passing from the abode of one master to that of another, applying themselves to reading. The Irish received them all most hospitably, supplied them with food without any recompense, and gave them books to read, and gratuitous tuition.[50]

round the neck, arms, and knees. He was also called one of the three blessed kings, on account of the protection and support afforded by him to the fugitive Christians, who were dispossessed by the Saxons. There is a church dedicated to him in Mona, and another in Denbighshire. Camb. Biog. p. 34.

[49] Bede characterizes the Irish as a people innoxiam et nationi Anglorum semper amicissimam, lib. iv. c. 26. — Malmsbury describes them as a "genus hominum innocens, genuina simplicitate, nil unquam mali moliens," p. 20.

[50] Bede, lib. iii. c. 27. He mentions two of these monasteries by name, Paegnalaech and Rathmelsigi. The studies pursued in Ireland about this time are implied rather than expressed, in the turnid and not easily comprehensible epistle of Aldhelm, to be the geometrical and gramatical arts, logic, rhetoric, and the Scriptures. I can hardly

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

684.

In the next year, Ecgfrid invaded the Picts with the same purpose of depredation; but a feigned flight of the natives seduced him into a defile. There at Drumnechtan they made a fierce assault upon him, and Ecgfrid perished with most of his troops.[51] The body of Ecgfrid was taken to Icolmkill, or the celebrated isle of St. Columba, and buried there.[52]

Slain against the Picts.

This disastrous expedition humbled the power of Northumbria.[53] The Irish and Scotch immediately disclaimed its predominance, and some of the Welsh princes obtained their independence. This kingdom, which, in the hands of Ethelfrid, Edwin, and Oswy, had menaced the others with subjection, was formidable to its contemporaries no more. The kings of Wessex and Mercia obscured it by their superior power, and it precipitated its own fall by incessant usurpations and civil wars.[54]

guess what he means by his "bis ternasque omissas physicæ artis machinas." Ush. Syll. p. 39.

[51] Bede, lib. iv. c. 26. The annals of Ulster thus mention his death: "Battle of Drumnechtan, on the 20th May, where Ecgfrid M'Offa was killed with a vast number of his men. He burnt Tula-aman Duinolla." Ant. Celt. Nor. p. 59.

[52] Sun. Dun., p. 5., calls the place of battle Nechtonesmere, which corresponds with the Drumnechtan of the Irish Chronicle.

[53] Thirteen years afterwards, Beorht, endeavouring to revenge the calamity by another invasion, also perished. Bede, lib. v. p. 24.—Ann. Ulst. 59. Sax. Chron. 49. Hunting. 337.

[54] Bede remarks the fines angustiores of Northumbria after Ecgfrid, lib. iv. c. 26. It is about this time that the authentic chronicles of the Welsh begin. Four of them are printed in the Welsh Archaiology, vol. ii. The Brut y Tywysogion begins with the year 680, and ends about 1280, p. 390—467. This is printed from the Red Book of Hergest. The Brut y Saeson, which is in the Cotton Library, begins, after a short introduction, in 683, and ends in 1197. Another copy of the Brut y Tywysogion, printed from MSS. in Wales, begins 660,

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

and ends 1196. Some extracts are also printed from another Chronicle called from the name of a former transcriber, Brut Jeuan Brechfa, beginning 686. These last three Chronicles occupy from p. 468 to p. 582. These Chronicles refer to Caradoc of Llancarvan, who lived in the twelfth century, as their author. As they contain facts and dates not always the same in all, it is not probable that Caradoc wrote them all. Their variations seem to have arisen from the imitations or additions of the ancient transcribers, who have brought them down below the times of Caradoc. Their general character is that of plain simple chronicles, in an humble, artless style, but seldom correct in their chronology. They scarcely ever agree with the Saxon dates.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

Reign of ALFRED *of* NORTHUMBRIA *and his Successors.* — *History of* WESSEX *to the Death of* INA.

CHAP. IX.

684—728. Alfred of Northumbria.

THE important improvements, which always occur to a nation, when its sovereign is attached to literature, give peculiar consequence to the reign of Alfred, who succeeded his brother Ecgfrid in Northumbria. He was the eldest, but not the legitimate son of Oswy, and was therefore prevented by the nobles of his country from ascending the throne, to which they elected his younger brother. This exclusion kept him several years from the royal dignity, but was beneficial both to his understanding and his heart. His name alone would interest us, as the precursor of the greater sovereign, his namesake; but the similarity of his intellectual taste and temper, with the pursuits and sentiments of the celebrated Alfred of Wessex, makes his character still more interesting. We cannot avoid remembering the lives and pursuits of those eminent men whose names we may happen to hear; and as Alfred of Northumbria appears in Bede as the first literary king among the Anglo-Saxons, we may reasonably suppose, that his example and reputation had no small influence in suggesting the love of study, and exerting the emulation of the distinguished son of Ethelwulf.

ALFRED, of Northumbria, whom Eddius distinguishes by the epithet of the most wise, had been

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 684.

educated by the celebrated Wilfrid.[1] He had governed Deira, under his father Oswy, and had contributed to the defeat of Penda. He had cultivated a friendship with Peada, and had married his sister; and by inspiring Peada with a favourable impression of Christianity, had occasioned its establishment in Mercia.[2]

REJECTED by the great from the crown of his father, he did not attempt to raise the sword of military competition against his brother: he submitted to the decision of the Northumbrian Witena, and retired contentedly to a private life. Learned ecclesiastics from Ireland had given to his father and country what intellectual information they had acquired. The larger tuition of Wilfrid, who had visited Rome, and studied in France[3], had inspired him with a fondness for knowledge which now became his happiness. He devoted himself to piety and literature, and voluntarily retired into Ireland, that he might pursue his unambitious studies.[4] For fifteen years he enjoyed a life of philosophic tranquillity and progressive improvement. The books revered by the Christians engrossed so much of his

[1] Bede, lib. iii. c. 25. He remunerated his preceptor by a bishopric, in the second year of his reign. Ibid. lib. v. c. 19. — Eddius Vit. Wilf. c. 43. — The Saxon MS. in the Cotton. Library, Vesp. D. 14. p. 132., spells the name Alfred. Bede calls him Alfridus.

[2] Bede, lib. iii. c. 21. c. 24. He reigned under his father. — Eddius, c. 7. c. 10. So Bede implies, c. 25.

[3] Bede, lib. iii. c. 25.

[4] "In insulis Scotorum ob studium literarum exulabat — in regionibus Scotorum lectioni operam dabat — ipse ob amorem sapientiæ spontaneum passus exilium." Bede Vita S. Cudbercti, c. 24. — "In Hyberniam seu vi seu indignatione secesserat, ibi et ab odio germani tutus, et magno otio litcris imbutus, omni philosophia composuerat animum." Malmsbury, 21. — Viro undecumque doctissimo. Bede, Hist. lib. v. c. 12. — Rex sapientissimus. Eddius Vit. Wilf. c. 43. — The wise king of the Saxons. Annals Ulster, p. 60.

Digitized by Google

attention, that one of the epithets applied to him was, "most learned in the Scriptures."[5] CHAP. IX.

684.

He exhibited to the world this example of contented privacy till the death of Ecgfrid raised him to the throne without a crime. The catastrophe of his brother had taught most impressively the folly of military ambition, and the national as well as personal comforts of the peaceful and intellectual virtues. He governed the kingdom, to which he was now invited, with the same virtue with which he had resigned it; he derived his happiness from the quiet and enjoyments of his people[6]; he encouraged literature, received with kindness the Asiatic travels of Arcuulfus, who had visited Greece, Syria, and Egypt, and which had been written by Adamnan, liberally rewarded the author, and by his bounty caused the composition to be imparted to others.[7]

Encourages literature.

The love of Alfred for knowlege became known beyond the precincts of Northumbria, and attracted the attention of the celebrated Aldhelm. The subjects chosen by the West-Saxon scholar, for the entertainment of the king, show the extent of the

[5] Bede, Hist. Abbat. Wiremuth. p. 300.—Alcuin describes him thus: Qui sacris fuerat studiis imbutus ab annis ætatis primæ, valido sermone sophista acer et ingenio, idem rex simul atque magister. De Pont. 718.

[6] "Per decem et novem annos summa pace et gaudio provinciæ præfuit: nihil unquam præter in persecutione magni Wilfridi quod livor edax digne carpere posset admittens." Malms. 21. Alcuin, p. 722.

[7] Bede, lib. v. c. 15. Bede calls the book De Locis Sanctis multis utillimum. Arcuulfus surveyed Jerusalem, Palestine, Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and the Archipelago. Returning home, he was driven by a tempest on Britain; Adamnan received him, listened eagerly to his conversations, and immediately committed them to writing. Bede, ibid. This work of Adamnan is apud Mabillon, Act. Ben. Sæc. iii. part ii. p. 502. There is a tract of Bede, De Locis Sanctis, taken from this of Adamnan, printed p. 315. of Smith's edition.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 684.

royal attainments. "On the number seven; collections from the flowers of the Bible, and the tenets of philosophers; on the nature of insensible things; and on the prosody and metre of poetry."[8]

YET, though attached to the studies of the clergy, he was not their undiscriminating instrument. He had made his early instructor, Wilfrid, a bishop; but when, in his opinion, that prelate was unduly pressing points, however conscientiously, which he disapproved of, he remained immovable in what he thought was right, and Wilfrid quitted his dominions.[9] We cannot now fairly judge of the subjects of their difference. They were on ecclesiastical privileges; but as Wilfrid, though an able man, was of an ambitious character, inclining to turbulence, and fond of domination, it is probable that Alfred was not unduly maintaining the fair liberty of his own judgment. The value of perseverance in any opinion depends upon its wisdom; but the principle, in men of his character, is always that of well-meaning rectitude.

THE pope, John VII., afterwards interfered, by a letter to Alfred, rather dictatorial.[10] And Wilfrid, from the Mercian court, to which he had retired, sent an abbot and another with the pope's letters and his own further expostulations. Alfred at first received them austerely. His manner was afterwards softened, but his purpose continued firm. His final answer was courteous, but decisive.

"MY venerable brothers:—Ask of me whatever things are necessary to your own comfort, and

[8] Malmsb. Pontif. p. 342.
[9] See Eddius, Vit. Wilf. c. 44—46.
[10] Eddius, c. 81. It was addressed also to Ethelred of Mercia.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

I will grant them, as proofs of my great respect for you; but from this day make no solicitations in behalf of Wilfrid your lord. What my royal predecessors, and the archbishop sent formerly from Rome, with almost all the prelates of Britain, thought fit to order, I will never change, while I live; whatever writings you may bring me from the apostolic seat, as you choose to call it." [11] 684.

ALFRED adhered with temperate firmness to his determination. The urgencies of the pope and Wilfrid could not shake it. He reigned over the province, which his knowlege enlightened, and his virtues cherished, for nineteen years. Sickness then fell upon him. In his last hours he was disturbed by the apprehension that he might have acted wrong in resisting the applications of the pope and prelate; but his speech failed him for several days before his death. When he expired, one Eadwulf assumed the sceptre, to whom Wilfrid began a journey with hopes of a friendly reception; but Eadwulf sent him this message; — "I swear, by my salvation, that unless he depart in six days from my kingdom, both he and all that I find with him shall perish." Wilfrid stopped in his progress; but he had with him the effective means of retorting the menace. Osred, the son of Alfred, had joined him, and in two months was established in Northumbria, and Eadwulf expelled.[12]

THE effect of Alfred's reign and habits in this province became visible in Ceolwulf, who soon succeeded to his throne. This prince, who acceded in 731, was the patron to whom Bede addressed his ecclesiastical history of the English nation. In the dedication, the venerable father of

[11] Eddius, c. 61.

[12] Eddius, c. 57.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 684.

the Anglo-Saxon learning says, that it was this king's delight not only to hear the Scriptures read, but to be well acquainted with the deeds and sayings of his illustrious predecessors. From this feeling he had desired Bede to compose his history. But the love of letters, which Alfred had kindled in his dominions, was soon afterwards quenched there by the sanguinary civil contests that succeeded. It spread, however, with a cheering influence to the other provinces of the octarchy. Bede and Alcuin may be considered as two of the valuable minds which it had excited.

Ceadwalla.

In the year of Ecgfrid's destruction, Ceadwalla began to contend for the throne of Wessex: he was descended from Cerdic, through Ceawlin and his son Cutha.[13] His youth was of great promise, and he suffered no opportunity of exerting his warlike talents to occur unimproved. Banished from his country by the factious chiefs who governed it, he was assiduous to assemble from it a military force, and he succeeded in drawing the youth of Wessex to his standard.[14] In Selsey he obtained money and horses from Wilfrid, the bishop[15], and directed his first onset on the king of Sussex, whom he surprised and destroyed, and whose kingdom he desolated. The royal generals, who had been warring in Kent, returned, and expelled the invader[16], who profited by his expulsion to secure to himself the crown of Wessex. This accession of

[13] Saxon Chron. 45. Malmsbury, in his Life of Aldhelm, p. 11. Wharton's Ang. Sac. 2., and 3 Gale, 346., says that Kentwin, morbo et senio gravis, appointed Cadwalla his successor; but as Kentwin only reigned nine years, the addition of senio gravis can hardly be correct.

[14] Malmsbury, p. 14.

[15] Malmsb. De Gest. Pontif. lib. iii. p. 265.

[16] Bede, lib. iv. c. 15. Flor. Wig. p. 255.

Digitized by Google

strength he wielded triumphantly against Sussex, which lost its defenders, and yielded to the fortune of his arms.[17] Ceadwalla also captured the Isle of Wight; but stained his prosperity with cruelty.[18] CHAP. IX. 684.

For two years, Ceadwalla and his brother Mollo plundered Kent, which had been harassed by Sussex, and weakened by incapable rulers.[19] The natives viewed the spoilers for some time with fruitless indignation. Town after town was ravaged. Rousing themselves at last, the men of Kent collected into a competent body, and attacked them with auspicious valour. Mollo, with twelve soldiers, was surprised in a cottage. The invaded people brutally surrounded them with flames, and they were reduced to ashes.[20] 686. Mollo's catastrophe.

In obeying the impulse of a headlong wrath, the Kentish men forgot that cruelty makes even the injured odious, and justifies punishment; it much oftener stimulates revenge than deters it. The brother of Mollo was on the throne of Wessex, and in the following year spread a torrent of vindictive calamities through Kent, which it mourned in all its districts.[21]

The Roman missionaries, and the ecclesiastics whom they educated had not only succeeded in establishing Christianity in England, but they

[17] Bede, ib. Flor. Wig. 255. Langhorn Chron. 241, 242. Sussex is said by Bede to have contained the land of 7000 families, lib. iv. c. 13.

[18] During this conquest he formed the inhuman project of destroying its inhabitants, and of repeopling it from his own province. Bede, lib. iv. c. 15.

[19] Hunting. lib. iv. p. 335. Malmsbury mentions the civil wars, which also afflicted Kent, lib. i. p. 11. In the preceding year, pestilentiâ depopulata est Britannia. Chron. Petri de Burgo, p. 4.

[20] Malmsbury, p. 11. Sax. Chron. p. 46. Huntingdon, p. 336. W. Thorn, in his Chronica, places the catastrophe at Canterbury, p. 1770. x. Script.

[21] Sax. Chron. 46. Hunting. 336.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

raised so strong a feeling of piety, in some of its Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, as to lead them to renounce the world. It was not only the widowed queen of Edwin, who gave the first precedent of an Anglo-Saxon lady of that rank taking the veil [22]; nor Oswy devoting his daughter Elfleda to a convent [23], who exhibited this religious zeal; but several of the sovereigns themselves, from its impulse, abandoned their thrones. Thus, in 688, Ceadwalla travelled to Rome as on a pilgrimage of piety, where he was baptised by the pope, and died, before he was thirty, in the following week.[24] Thus also some years afterwards, in 709, two other Anglo- Saxon kings, Cenred of Mercia, and Offa of Essex, probably affected by the example of Ceadwalla, quitted that dignity which so many myriads covet, went to Rome, and became monks there.[25] And thus, also, at no long interval, a greater sovereign than either, Ina of Wessex, obeyed the same impression, took the same journey, and found his grave in the same venerated city. Offa is described as a most amiable youth, who was induced to abdicate his power from the purest motives of devotion. It is remarked by an old chronicler, that the examples of these two kings produced a thousand imitations.[26]

686. Ceadwalla's death.

688. Ina's accession.

Ina succeeded Ceadwalla in Wessex. He was the son of Cenred, who was the nephew of Cynegils.[27] His father was living at the period of his accession.

[22] Smith's Bede, p. 101. note. [23] Bede, lib. iii. c. 29.

[24] Sax. Chron. 46. Bede, lib. v. c. 7. Sergius gave him the name of Peter. An epitaph in Latin verse was inscribed on his tomb which Bede quotes.

[25] Bede, lib. v. c. 19.

[26] Hunt. 337 [27] Sax. Chron. 47. Bede, lib. v. c. 7.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

688.

THE Saxon octarchy, amidst all its vicissitudes, presented in one province or the other an uninterrupted succession of great men. From Hengist to Egbert, talents were never wanting on some of the Anglo-Saxon thrones. The direction of the royal capacity varied; in some kings valour, in others military conduct; in some piety, in some learning, in some legislative wisdom, predominated. The result was, that the Anglo-Saxons, though fluctuating in the prosperity of their several districts, yet, considered as a nation, went on rapidly improving in civilisation and power.

His laws.

MUCH of the fame of Ina has been gained by his legislation. He published a collection of laws which yet remains[28], and he deserves the gratitude of mankind in common with every other lawgiver. Whoever applies himself to mark the useful limits of human action, to set boundaries to individual selfishness, to establish the provisions of justice in defence of the weak or injured, and to rescue the criminal from punishments of caprice or favour, is a character entitled to the veneration of mankind. A declamation against laws is a satire upon wisdom the most benevolent. Laws must partake of the ignorance and spirit of the age which gave them birth. An Ina must legislate as an Ina, and for the people of an Ina. If the subsequent improvements of mankind discover that prior regulations have been defective, succeeding legislators will correct those provisions, which the progress of society has made obsolete or improper. What they may devise, their posterity, who will have changed

[28] Wilkins's Leges Saxonicæ, p. 14—27. The first paragraph of these announces his father Cenred as one of the counsellors by whose advice he promulgated them.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

into new beings, may mould into a fitter correspondence with their own necessities; but to abolish all laws, because laws are not all perfect, would be to unchain the tiger passions of mankind, and to convert society into an African desert, or a Cytherean brothel.

688.

694. Kent devastated.

THE wrath of the West Saxons for the fate of Mollo had not relented. With inhumanity, as great as that which they professed to chastise, they continued to desolate Kent. At length, their hostilities were appeased by the homicidal mulct of thirty thousand marks of gold.[29] Wihtred, from the line of Ethelbert, had obtained the crown of Kent, and terminated the miseries which the people had suffered from the invasion and a turbulent inter-regnum.[30]

697. Mercians destroy their queen.

THE Mercian nobility displayed the ferocity of the age, in destroying Ostrida, the wife of Ethelred, their reigning king.[31] The cause of her fate is not known. The reason adduced by Langhorn[32], that her sister had murdered Peada, is unlikely, because this event had occurred near forty years before. Ethelred exhibited another instance of the spirit of

704. religion among the Anglo-Saxon kings. He voluntarily descended from the throne, to become monk and abbot of Bardney[33]: he was succeeded by his nephew, Cenred.[34]

[29] Sax. Chron. 47, 48. Malmsbury, 14. Others make the payment smaller; as Polychronicon, p. 243., 3000 pounds; Flor. Wig. p. 260., 3750 pounds. Wihtred, unable to resist Ina, proposed the expiatory fine. Huntingd. 337.

[30] Sax. Chron. 48. Huntingd. 337.

[31] Bede, lib. v. c. ult. Sax. Chron. 49. Flor. Wig. 260. Matt. West. 250. She was sister to Ecgfrid, and daughter of Oswy. I observe her name signed to a charter of Peterborough monastery in 680. 1 Dugd. Monast. 67. Ego Ostrich regina Ethelredi.

[32] Chron. Reg. Angl. p. 256.

[33] In this capacity he died in 716. Chron. Petri de Burgo, 6.

[34] Malmsbury, 28.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

OSRED, the son of Alfred, and but eight years old at his father's death, had been besieged by the usurper Eadulf already noticed, with his guardian Berthfrid, in Bebbanburgh, the metropolis of this northern kingdom.[35] After their deliverance, and the dethronement of the usurping competitor, Berthfrid, the protecting præfect of Northumbria, defeated the Picts between Hæfe and Cære, in the field of Manan. Finguin M'Delaroith perished in the battle.[36] It is not stated who commanded the Picts, but Nectan, or Naiton, was king of this people at this period.[37]

704.

709.

INA continued to reign prosperously. He waged war with Geraint, the British king of Cornwall. Amid the first charges, Higbald, a Saxon leader, fell; but at last the Britons[38] fled. Ina also prosecuted a war with Ceolred, who had succeeded his cousin Cenred in Mercia. At Wodnesbury they

710. Ina defeats Geraint,

[35] Malmsb. de Pontif. lib. iii. p. 268. Eddius Vit. Wilf. c. 57. p. 85. Hoveden describes Bebbanburgh to have been a city munitissima non admodum magna, sed quasi duorum vel trium agrorum spatium, habens unum introitum cavatum, et gradibus miro modo exaltatum. On the top of the mountain was the church. Annal. pars prior, 403. The city was built by Ida.

[36] Sax. Chron. 50. Flor. Wig. 264. Bede, lib. v. c. 24., dates it 711. Gibson, in his Appendix to the Chronicle, conjectures that Hæfe and Cære were Carehouse and Heefeld, a little beyond the wall, p. 18. "710. Slaughter of the Picts in the field of Manan, among the Saxons, where Finguin M'Delaroith perished." Annals of Ulster, p. 60.

[37] Nectan, in the Annals of Ulster, p. 60. In 716 he drove the family of Iona beyond Drum-albin, ibid. p. 60. In 725 he was put in chains by king Drust, ibid. p. 61. Bede, lib. v. c. 21., calls him Naiton, and mentions his changing the time of Easter to the Roman period, which the Annals of Ulster place in 715, p. 60.

[38] Sax. Chron. 50. Hunting. 337. Flor. Wig. 264. This Geraint was the third of that name in Cornwall. Owen's Llywarch, p. 8. Aldhelm addressed to him a letter on the British celebration of Easter, which is among the epistles of Boniface. Biblioth. Magna Pat. v. 16. p. 65. ep. 44. In this he styles Geraint, domino gloriosissimo occidentalis regni sceptra gubernanti, Geruntio regi.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

met; the slaughter of the battle was great; the event was no advantage to either.[39]

715. and Ceolred.

CEOLRED, king of Mercia[40], was succeeded by Ethelbald, who possessed the crown for forty-one

716.

years. In this year Osred of Northumbria, the eldest son of Alfred, was destroyed at the lake of Windamere by his revolting kinsmen[41], one of whom Coenred, the son of Cuthwin, succeeded[42]; but he fell from the agitated throne two years afterwards, and Osric, another son of the learned Alfred, took his place.[43]

Inigils, the ancestor of Egbert.

IN 718, Inigils, the brother of Ina, died. Though no achievement of greatness is attached to his name in history, yet the events of the future time have given it importance. He was the ancestor from whom Egbert and Alfred, and the follow-

718.

ing Saxon monarchs of England, deduced their descent.[44]

Ina builds Glastonbury abbey.

INA rebuilt the abbey of Glastonbury at the request of Aldhelm. It had been utterly destroyed, but he erected it with magnificence, and it lasted until the Danish ravages.[45] The insurrection of

[39] Sax. Chron. 50. Hunt. 338.

[40] Unless we interpret the account, given by Boniface, of Ceolred's dying conversation with the devil, who came for him in the middle of a feast, (Malmsb. 28.) as a sudden incidence of insanity, the missionary of Germany is at variance with Huntingdon, who says of Ceolred, that patriæ et avitæ virtutis hæres clarissime rexit, p. 337.

[41] Malmsb. 21. Huntingd. 338. Bede, lib. v. c. 24. Sax. Chron. 51. Osred has received the lash of Boniface. Malmsb. 28.— Malmsbury complains of him, p. 21.

[42] Bede, lib. v. c. 22. Flor. Wig. 266.

[43] Bede, lib. v. c. 23. Simeon Dunel. p. 7. The expressions of Malmsbury imply that Osric assisted to procure his brother Osred's death: he says of Kenred and Osric, domini sui occisi sanguinem luentes fœdo exitu auras polluere, p. 21.

[44] Sax. Chron. 51. Asser. p. 3. Abb. Rieval, 350.

[45] Bromton, p. 758. He founded the great church of Glastonbury pro anima propinqui ejus Mollonis. See his charters to it. 1 Dugdale,

Digitized by Google

pretenders disturbed the close of Ina's reign: but he attacked and destroyed Cynewulf Ætheling; and in the next year his queen besieged another, Ealdbryht, in Taunton, a castle which the king had built to defend that part of his dominions, and in which the rebel had taken his post of enmity. She levelled it to the ground, and Ealdbryht withdrew into Sussex. Ina directed his forces against this province, and three years afterwards slew his competitor.[46] 721.

His queen advises his abdication.

After a fortunate reign of thirty-seven years, the king imitated the custom which had become so remarkable among the Anglo-Saxon kings, and laid down his dignity. His queen had long exhorted him, as his age advanced, to retire from the concerns of the world; but the charms of habitual power for some time defeated her eloquence. One day, as she travelled with the king to one of his rural mansions, where a splendid feast was prepared with all the pomp and bustle of royal luxury, she seized the occasion of converting it to a moral lecture on her favourite theme. They left the place after the repast, and a rustic by her orders, in their absence, scattered the festive hall with filth and rubbish, and placed a swinish litter on the couch where he had reposed. Before they had advanced two miles on their road, she desired to return, and Ina courteously complied with her request; but when he entered the hall of his festivity, and saw the disgusting change, he contemplated it with silent astonishment and displeasure, till in-

Monast. 12, 13. Malmsb. de Ant. Glast. 3 Gale, 309. 311. His other gifts to it were magnificent.

[46] Sax. Chron. 52. Hunt. 338. Flor. Wig. 268

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

formed that the queen had directed it: he demanded from her an explanation of the strange mystery. She smiled and answered: "My lord and husband! this is not indeed the noisy hilarity of yesterday: here are no brilliant hangings, no flattery, and no parasites: here are no tables weighed down with silver vessels: no exquisite delicacies to delight the palate: all these are gone like the smoke and wind. Have they not already passed away into nothingness? And should we not feel alarmed who covet them so much? for we shall be as transient. Are not all such things? are not we ourselves like a river, hurrying heedless and headlong, to the dark ocean of illimitable time? Unhappy must we be if we let them absorb our minds. Think, I entreat you, how disgusting those things become of which we have been so enamoured. See to what filthy objects we are attached. In these loathsome relics we may see what our pampered bodies will at last be. Ah! let us reflect, that the greater we have been, and the more powerful we are now, the more alarmed ought to be our solicitude; for the greater will be the punishment of our misconduct."[47]

721.

Ina goes to Rome.

THE singularity of the incident had its full impression on the mind of Ina: he resigned his crown to his kinsman, and, imitating what all ranks were then emulous to do, he travelled to Rome.[48] He founded there a Saxon school, for the instruction of his countrymen who chose to be educated

[47] Malmsbury, p. 15.

[48] Bede, lib. v. c. 7. Sax. Chron. 52. Flor. Wig. 269. M. West. 265. Bede says of Ina's journey, that it was what in these times plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles, ignobiles, laici, clerici, viri ac feminæ, certatim facere consuerunt.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

721.

at Rome, and he added a church for their service, and for the convenience of their burial. To support this, and to provide a subsistence for the English who should dwell there, he imposed the payment of a penny on every family, which was denominated Romescot. It was sent to the papal see.[49] Ina studiously avoided all pomp in his voluntary humiliation. He cut off his hair, put on a plebeian dress, and lived with his queen a private and retired life, even seeking support by the labour of his hands, till he died there.[50] This conduct was evidence that his religious feelings were genuine impulses of sincerity.

THE mutations of the octarchy for the last century had been generally from an heptarchy to an hexarchy; at the period of Ina's death it was an hexarchy, because Wessex had absorbed Sussex, and Deira and Bernicia were amalgamated into Northumbria. This restless province was then governed by Osric, who left the kingdom to Ceolwulf, the brother of Cenred, whom he had destroyed[51], and the friend and patron of Bede. In Mercia, Ethelbald, a descendant of Wybba, reigned.[52] In Essex, which was becoming fast the satellite of Mercia, Suebricht had governed alone

731. The Anglo-Saxon kings at this period. 716—756.

[49] Matt. West. 265.

[50] Dug. Monast. i. p. 14. 32. Malm. Pont. 313. Alcuin mentions him by the name of In:

"Quem clamant IN, incerto cognomine, gentes."
Oper. p. 1676.

[51] Flor. Wig. 269. Malmsb. 21. Ceolwulf submitted to the tonsure in 737, and Eadbert succeeded. Smith's Bede, p. 224. Ceolwulf was descended from Ocga, one of the sons of Ida. Sim. Dun. p. 7. Bede in one line expresses the vicissitudes of Ceolwulf, and the state of the country, captus et adtonsus et remissus in regnum, lib. v. c. ult.

[52] Sax. Chron. 51. 59. Bede, lib. v. c. 24. He was the son of Alwion. Ing. 33.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

since his brother Offa went to Rome.[53] In Kent, Eadbert had ascended the throne of Wihtred, whose laws remain to us.[54] In East Anglia, Aldulphus was succeeded by Selred; on his death, Alphuald, for a short time, inherited the sceptre.[55]

725.

747.

[53] By mistake, Langhorn, 281., and Rapin, place Selred on the throne of Essex. Malmsb. 35.; Flor. Wig. 273.; and Al. Beverl. 85., led them into the error. We learn from Huntingdon, that Selred was king of East Anglia, p. 339., whom the Chronicle of Mailros supports. Suebricht or Suebred was king of Essex, and died 738. Mailros, p. 136. Sim. Dunelm. 100. A charter of his, dated 704, is in Smith's Appendix to Bede, p. 749. In another he signs with Sebbi and Sighear, ib. p. 748. Swithred reigned in Essex 758, Sim. Dun. 275.

[54] After a reign of thirty-four years and a half, Wihtred died in 725, and left Edilberct, Eadbert, and Alric his heirs. Bede, lib. v. c. 23. Eadbert reigned until 748. Sax. Chron. 56. or 749. Mailros, p. 137. Ethelbert until 760. Sax. Chron. 60. when the surviving brother, Alric, succeeded, Malmsbury, p. 11. After this period we find three kings again in Kent signing charters contemporaneously; as in 762 Sigiraed and Eadbert appear, in one charter, as kings of Kent; and in another, Eardulf; and in 765 Egebert signs a charter with the same title. Thorpe, Reg. Roffens, p. 16. So many kings, in so small a province as Kent, strikingly illustrate the gavel-kind tenure of lands which still prevails there.

[55] In the synod at Hatfield in 680, Aldulph was present. This was the seventeenth year of his reign. Bede, lib. iv. c. 17., and the Ely History, MSS. Cott. Nero. A. 15., state Aldulph to have been reigning in 679. The Chronicle of Mailros accurately places Selred after him, who died 747. 1 Gale Script. 137. Alphuald, the successor of Selred, died 749, ibid. Humbean and Albert divided the kingdom afterwards, ibid. Sim. Dun. 103. M. West. names them Beorna and Ethelbert, p. 273. Bromton, p. 749. Flor. Wig. places Beorn in 768, p. 275. I hope these few last notes correctly state a very troublesome chronology.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

The History of the Octarchy, from the Death of INA *to the Accession of* EGBERT, *in the Year* 800.

CHAP. X.

728. Æthelheard in Wessex.

ÆTHELHEARD, the kinsman of Ina, and a descendant of Cerdic, obtained the crown of West Saxony.[1] Oswald, also sprung from the founder of Wessex, at first opposed his pretensions, but discovering the inferiority of his forces, abandoned the contest.[2] The king invaded Devonshire, and was extending the ravages into Cornwall, when the Britons, under Rodri Malwynawc, vanquished him at Heilyn, in Cornwall. At Garth Maelawch, in North Wales, and at Pencoet, in Glamorganshire, the Cymry also triumphed.[3] On Æthel-

[1] Sax. Chron. 52. Flor. Wig. 269. Ran. Higd. Chron. Petri de Burgo, p. 6. gives this date, which Ethelwerd, p. 837., also sanctions. Matt. West. p. 266. has 727, yet the expressions of Bede, a contemporary, imply the year 725. Smith's ed. p. 188., note. — A passage of Malmsbury, in his Antiq. Glast. Eccles. p. 312., promises to reconcile the contradictions. It states that Ina went twice to Rome. "Eodem anno quo idem rex Romam personaliter adiit, privilegium apostolico signaculo corroboratum in redeundo Glastoniam apportavit. Et postea iterum cum Ethelburga regina sua, instinctu ejusdem, Romam abiit." — Bede may have dated his first peregrination; the others his last.

[2] Huntingd. 338. In the charter of Ina, transcribed by Malmsbury, Antiq. Glast. p. 312., Ethelheard signs frater reginæ. Oswald was the son of Ethelbald, of the race of Cerdic, through Cealwin and Cuthwin. Flor. Wig. 269. Sax. Chron. 53. The plural expression of Bede, taken in its natural force, seems to express that Ina left his crown to Oswald, as well as Ethelheard, "ipse relicto regno ac juvenioribus commendato," lib. v. c. 7.

[3] Brut y Saeson, and Brut y Tywysogion, 471, 472.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

heard's death, Cuthred, his kinsman, succeeded him.[4]

728. Ethelbald in Mercia.

THE king of Mercia at this period, Ethelbald, was a man of elegant stature, a powerful frame, a warlike and imperious spirit. Persecuted in his youth by the king he had succeeded, and to whom he had been dangerous, he owed his safety to the secresy of his retreat. Here the pious Guthlac endeavoured to moralise his mind, and, in gratitude to the friend of his adversity, Ethelbald constructed the monastery of Croyland over his tomb.[5] The military abilities of this Mercian king, procured him the same predominance over the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which Egbert afterwards acquired. He subdued them all up to the Humber; and afterwards, in 737, invaded and conquered Northumbria.[6] The Welsh next attracted his ambition; and, to annex the pleasant region between the Severn and the Wye to his Mercian territories, he entered Wales with a powerful army. At Carno, a mountain in Monmouthshire, the Britons checked his progress in a severe battle, and drove him over

728. Wars with the Welsh.

[4] Sax. Chron. 55. The Chronicle of Mailros, a document valuable for its general accuracy, countenances Bede's date of Æthelheard's reign; it says, that in 740, after a reign of fourteen years, he died. 1 Gale's Rer. Angl. Script. p. 136.

[5] Ingulf. p. 2—4. To sustain the stony mass, an immense quantity of wooden piles was driven into the marsh; and hard earth was brought in boats nine miles, to assist in making the foundation. There is a MS. life of Guthlac, in the Cotton Library, Vesp. D. 21., in Saxon, by a monk named Alfric, and addressed to Alfwold, king of East Anglia. His beginning will show the respectful style used by the clergy to the sovereigns at that time. "Upum pealdendne pihc zelyfendum, a populo a populo minum cham leoperran hlaforde, ofer ealle ochre men eopolice Kyninzar, Alfpolo Earc Angla Kyninz, mid pihte ec mid ze-pirenum pice healdend. MSS. ibid.

[6] Hunt. lib. iv. p. 339, 340. Sax. Chron. 54.

Digitized by Google

the Wye with great loss.[7] But he afterwards marched another army against the Britons, in conjunction with Cuthred, who had succeeded Æthelheard in Wessex. The great superiority of the Saxon forces obtained a decisive victory at Ddefawdan. After much plunder, the victors retired.[8]

743. Defeats them.

THE friendship between Ethelbald and Cuthred was not lasting. Cuthred wished to emancipate himself from the power of the Mercian, who, to keep Wessex in subjection, fomented its civil distractions. The son of Cuthred gave him this advantage. This impetuous youth attempted to depose his father, but perished in the guilty struggle.[9] Two years after, Cuthred suppressed a dangerous rebellion of Edelhun, one of his chieftains, whose extraordinary valour would have conquered the superior numbers of the king, if in the hour of victory a wound had not disabled him.[10]

748. Suppresses a rebellion.

CUTHRED now presuming his power to be equal to the effort, disclaimed the intolerable exactions of Ethelbald, and resolved to procure the independence of Wessex, or to perish in the contest. At Burford in Oxfordshire, the rival princes met. Cuthred was assisted by the brave Edelhun, who had now become a loyal subject; Ethelbald displayed the forces of Kent, East Anglia, and Essex, in joint array with his Mercians. Edelhun, advancing beyond his line, pierced the golden

War between Cuthred and Ethelbald. 752.

[7] Brut y Tywysogion, p. 472.

[8] Brut y Tywysogion, p. 472. Flor. Wig. 272. Sax. Chron. 55. Mailros, p. 136., and Matt. West. 271. date the event in 744.

[9] Sax. Chron. 55. Mailros, 137. Huntingdon, 341. His expression, that Ethelbald afflixit eum nunc seditionibus nunc bellis, implies that the insurrection was fostered by Mercia.

[10] Hunt. 341. Sax Chron. 56. Flor. Wig. 273.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

752. dragon [11], the splendid banner of Mercia, and, animated by his intrepidity, the West Saxons poured the shout of battle, and rushed to the charge. The chronicler describes with unusual warmth a conflict terrible to both armies. Ambition inflamed the friends of Mercia. The horrors of subjection made Wessex desperate. Slaughter followed the sword of Edelhun, and Ethelbald raged like a resistless fire. Their mutual fury brought the general and the king into personal collision; each collected his full vigour, and struck at the other with a power and determination that menaced destruction in every blow: but the king of Mercia at last discerned the superiority of his antagonist, and preferring safety to glory, he gave to his yet struggling army the first example of an hasty flight.[12]

The event of this conflict rescued Wessex from the yoke of Mercia, and established the foundation of that predominance which was afterwards improved into the conquest of the island. Cuthred again successfully invaded the country of the Welsh.[13]

753. Cuthred attacks the Welsh.

In 754, Cuthred died, leaving Wessex in a state of progress towards that superiority which, under the reign of Egbert, it finally attained. Sigebyrht

[11] The ancient Wittichind describes the Saxon standard on the continent, as a representation of a lion and a dragon with an eagle flying above; intended to be symbols of their bravery, prudence, and rapidity, Hist. Sax. p. 6.

[12] Huntingdon has preserved the circumstances of the battle, p. 341. It is also mentioned in Sax. Chron. 56. Flor. Wig. p. 273. Mailros dates it, as it does the events of this period, a year later, p. 137. A stone coffin was found near Burford, in December, 1814.

[13] Sax. Chron. 56. Mailros, 137. The British Chronicles state a battle at Henford about this time, in South Wales, where the Cymry triumphed. Brut y Tywys. 473.

Digitized by Google

succeeded[14]; his reign was short, arrogant, and tyrannical; he perverted the laws to his convenience, or presumptuously violated them. When Cumbra, the noblest of his earls, obeyed the solicitations of the people, and intimated their complaints to the king, he was arbitrarily put to death, and the grievances were multiplied. The nobles and the people assembled: after a careful deliberation, Sigebyhrt was deposed from his authority by an unanimous decision, and Cynewulf, a youth of the royal blood, was elected in his place. Deserted by all, the deposed king fled into the wood of Anderida: a swineherd of the murdered Cumbra discovered him in his hiding-place, and immediately slew him.[15]

753. Sigebyrht succeeds.

Is deposed, and Cynewulf chosen.

The long reign of Ethelbald, at one period so successful, terminated in calamity. His defeat by Wessex was never retrieved, and he perished at last by civil insurrection; by the same means of evil with which he had endeavoured to oppress Cuthred. At Seggeswold the fatal battle ensued, for which he was not prepared, and Ethelbald fell, either by assassination or in the general slaughter. Bernred, who headed the rebellion, attempted to invest himself with the robes of royalty; but the nomination of Ethelbald was supported by the nobles of Mercia, and the young prince, Offa, who has acquired such celebrity, and who was descended from Eoppa, the brother of Penda, was

755. Ethelbald perishes.

Offa made king.

[14] Flor. Wig. 273. Sax. Chron. 56. Cant-wara-burh, Canterbury, was burnt this year.

[15] Hunt. 341, 342. Malmsb. 15. Mailros, 137. Ethelwerd names the place of his death Pryfetesfleodan, p. 838.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

placed upon the throne.[16] Bernred did not survive the year.[17]

731. The revolutions of Northumbria.

We may pause a moment to cast a rapid glance on Northumbria. Ceolwulf, the friend of Bede, had acceded to the united kingdoms; but so perilous was the regal dignity in this perturbed

737. kingdom, that he voluntarily abandoned the disquieting crown, and sought the tranquillity of the cloister.[18]

Eadbert succeeded. His kingdom, left unprotected by his march against the Picts, suffered from an invasion of the Mercian Ethelbald; but he

755. afterwards enlarged his dominions[19], and had the ability to maintain himself in his crown for twenty-one years; but religious impressions then came

[16] Ingulf, p. 5. Mailros, 137. Matt. West. p. 274. apparently misconceiving a passage of Huntingdon, p. 341., erroneously makes Ethelbald to have fallen against Cuthred, whom he represents to have survived him. The monk of Croyland enables us to rectify the mistake, and is supported by Malmsb. 28. and by the Sax. Chron. p. 56. and Flor. Wig. p. 273., who place the decease of Cuthred a year before Ethelbald's. Bede implies, that Ethelbald perished by assassination, lib. v. c. ult.

[17] That Bernred died this year has been disputed. Malmsb. p. 28.; Alur. Beverl. 87.; Ingulf, 5. The biographer of Offa, p. 11.; Flor. Wig. 274.; Ethelward, 839. affirm or imply it. On the other hand, Matt. West. p. 274.; Sax. Chron. 59.; Bromton, 776.; and some others, state Bernred's expulsion only; and Matt. West. 277. makes him to perish by fire in the year 769, after having burnt the town of Catterick. But the Chronicle of Mailros, which, p. 137., mentions the attempt on the Mercian crown, by Beornred, calls the person, who caused and perished in the fire of Catterick, Earnredus, p. 138. Hence it is not certain that they were the same persons, and if not, the aufugavit of the one side is not sufficiently explicit to disprove the death stated on the other.

[18] Huntingdon, p. 340., paints strongly the apprehensions of Ceolwulf: "Ipse horribilibus curis necis, et proditionis, et multimodæ calamitatis, intus cruciebatur, et animo et corpore decoquebatur." Bede remarks, that an excessive drought destroyed the fertility of this year, lib. v. c. ult.

[19] Hunt. p. 340. Sax. Chron. p. 54. Bede, lib. v. c. ult. Sim. Dun. 11.

Digitized by Google

upon him, and he assumed the religious life.[20] He was the eighth Anglo-Saxon king who had exchanged the crown for the cowl. But on his abdication all the fruits of the wise example and useful reign of Alfred seemed to vanish in the turbulent activity of the excited mind of the country taking now a mischievous direction: the turbulence of civil murder again broke loose. His son Osulf, in the first year of his accession, perished from domestic treachery, and Moll Edelwold ventured to accept the crown.[21] In his third year his life and honours were fiercely assaulted by one of his leaders, Oswin, whom he slew at Edwinescliffe. At no long interval afterwards the tomb received him, and Alred, of the race of Ida[22], was elevated to the crown. After a few years he was driven out, and Ethelred, the son of Moll, was chosen in his stead.[23] In his third year, this king fraudulently procured the death of two of his generals by the instrumentality of two others. In the very next year, these men rebelled against himself, destroyed in two successive attacks others of his commanders, and expelled him from his kingdom.[24]

CHAP. X.

757.

765.

774.

[20] Hunt. 342. Sax. Chron. 59. Chron. Petrib. 8. Huntingdon ascribes Eadbert's retreat to the impression made upon his mind by the violent deaths of Ethelbald and Sigebert, contrasted with the peaceful exit of Ceolwulf.

[21] Bede says he was a sua plebe electus; and adds, that in his second year a great mortality took place, and lasted for two years. The dysentery was the principal malady, lib. v. c. ult.

[22] By his son Edric, Sim. Dun. 11. Two letters of Alred to Lullus, a French bishop, are extant, Mag. Bibl. 16. 88. and apud Du Chesne, Hist. Franc. vol. ii. p. 854. In the one he desires the bishop's assistance in establishing an amity with Charlemagne; the other is a letter of civility from Alred and his queen Osgeotha, to Lullus, congratulating him on his arrival from a long journey.

[23] Chr. Mailros, 137, 138. Hunt. 342. Sax. Chron. 60, 61. Matt. West. 276. 278.

[24] Mailros, 138.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Alfwold obtained it; but such was the spirit of the country, that in the following year two chieftains
779. raised an army, seized the king's ealdorman, Beorn, and his justiciary, and burnt them to ashes, because, in the estimation of the rebels, their administration of justice had been too severe.[25]
788. Alfwold, to whom a chronicle applies the epithet, "King of the innocent," was treacherously killed by his patrician, Sigan; and Osred, his kinsman, son of Alred, acceded. In the next year he was betrayed and driven out, and Ethelred, the son of Moll, was recalled.[26] But as adversity, though it corrects many dispositions into virtue, yet sometimes only exasperates the stubborn, so it appears to have rather increased than diminished the ob-
792. duracy of Ethelred. In the year of his restoration, he left Eardulf weltering in his blood at the gate of a monastery; and in the following year he dragged Elf and Elwin, the children of Alfwold, from York, and slew them. Osred, who had been deposed, attempted to recover the crown; his army deserted him, he fell into the hands of Ethelred, and perished. This prince now endeavoured, by a marriage with the daughter of Offa, to secure his authority, and for this purpose he repudiated his previous wife. But his policy and his murders were equally vain. Whoever, by an example of

[25] Mailros, 139. Hunt. 343. Sax. Chron. 62.

[26] Mailros, 139. Hunt. 343. Chron. Pet. 10. Rich. Hag. 298. Saxon Chron. 64. Osred took refuge in the Isle of Man, Sim. Dun. 12. Alcuin addressed to Ethelred, or, as he spells the name, Edelred, a letter of strong moral exhortation, which is still in existence. He reminds him how many of his predecessors had perished, propter injustitias et rapinas et immunditias vitæ. He intreats his people to be at peace between themselves, and to be faithful to their lord, that, by their concord, the kingdom might be extended, quod sæpe per discordiam minui solebat. Alcuini opera, p. 1537. ed. Paris, 1617.

Digitized by Google

cruelty, lessens the public horror at deeds of blood, diminishes his own safety, and gives popularity to his own assassination. In the fourth year of Ethelred's restoration, his subjects, whom he had assisted to brutalize, destroyed him, and set up Osbald. After a reign of twenty-seven days, they deposed Osbald, and he obtained security in the cloister.[27] Eardulf, who had been recovered from his assassination by the charity of the monks, who found him apparently lifeless near their cloister, had fled to Charlemagne, and visited Rome. The emperor of the West, in conjunction with the papal legate, assisted him in his efforts to regain his kingdom: and he was crowned in 794. Before four years elapsed, they who had murdered Ethelred, revolted from Eardulf; and under their leader, Wada, endeavoured to destroy him. The sword of the king prevailed, and the rebels fled.[28] Here for a while we will quit this region of civil discord. Happy is the country in which the regal office is not elective, nor the right of succession permitted to be questionable! An hereditary monarchy, though, like all human institutions, it has its inconveniences, yet has not been the contrivance of childish thinkers or half-way politicians; it was the benevolent invention of human wisdom, profiting from the most disastrous experience. No contests have been more baneful to human life and happiness, than those which have sprung from the

[27] Mailros, 139.

[28] Ann. Franc. ap. Du Chesne, vol. ii. p. 45. Mailros, 140. Huntingdon might well say, "Gens Anglorum naturaliter dura est et superba, et ideo bellis intestinis incessanter attrita." Alcuin displays the angry feelings of Charlemagne at this repetition of ferocity at Northumbria; he styled them a nation perfidam et perversam, pejorem paganis. Malmsb. 26.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 792.

uncertain right of accession, and from the practicability of attaining power by violence. It was a noble effort of advancing civilzation, which strove to annihilate the evil, by accustoming mankind to revere as sacred the laws of hereditary succession.

Traditions concerning Offa and his queen

OFFA, who had obtained with violence the throne of Mercia[29], displayed talents, and enjoyed a prosperity, which have made his name illustrious. His youth has been fabulously represented as distinguished by a wonderful transformation, from a miserable child, afflicted with imperfections in his speech, and the most important senses of the intellect, the sight and hearing, into an elegant frame, adorned with every human accomplishment.[30] His monastic panegyrist has also bequeathed to his queen Drida, or Cynedrida, a series of adventures scarcely probable, and which have the aspect of having been invented, in order to impute to her, more plausibly, the crime which has stained the memory of Offa for ever.[31] When he had enjoyed his throne many years, he began to covet an augmentation of dominion. Some of his attacks were

[29] Bede's expression, concerning the accession of Offa, is, that having driven out Bernred, he sought the kingdom with a blood-stained sword, lib. v. c. ult. An epithet so marking, as sanguinolento, from a contemporary, implies that Offa's reign commenced with human slaughter.

[30] Vita Offæ secundi, added to Watts's edition of Matthew Paris, p. 10.—The author of it was some monk of St. Alban's; he makes Offa's real name Pineredus. The name Offa was derived from a king, whom he calls Offa primus, the son of Warmund, who had similar defects, and a cure as miraculous. His editor believes that this Offa primus never existed but in his page. I have however discovered him in Saxo-Grammaticus. Saxo says, Warmund, the 17th king of Denmark, had in his age a son named Uffo, who excelled his coëvals in his person, but who was thought weak in mind, and never spoke till the king of Saxony endangered his father, &c. 59—65.

[31] The account is, that the lady was allied to the French king, but for some crime was adjudged to die. Respect for majesty saved her

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

against the Northumbrians[32], and the Hestingi.[33] He invaded Kent, and a great slaughter ensued at Otford, in which Offa triumphed, and Kent submitted to the power of Mercia.[34] Afterwards he measured his strength with the king of Wessex, at Bensington, and established his great power by defeating Cynewulf, and subjecting part of his dominions.[35] 792. Offa's wars. 774.

The conquests of Offa have not been transmitted to us in accurate detail; but the celebrity which he attained, and the blood which his contemporary, Alcuin, attests him to have shed, imply many warlike and not rightful exertions.[36] The prerogatives which he exercised confirm the traditions of his power. He founded the abbey at St. Alban's, and the abbey of Bath; and made gifts of land to Can-

from the ordeals of iron and fire. She was committed to the chances of the sea in an open boat, with little food; the stormy ocean threw her on the coast of Wales, and she was conducted to Offa. A plaintive story interested his compassion, and he recommended her to the protection of his mother. Her charms or her wiles animated his pity into love, and she became his wife. Vita Offæ, p. 12.

[32] Bromton, x Script. p. 776., puts the Northumbri first; but Huntingdon, 348., places them after his other conquests. So Matt. West. 275., and Hoveden, 409.

[33] Mailros, p. 138. Hoveden, 403. Sim. Dun. 107.—The situation of these people is contested. Mr. Watts thinks them of Hastings, one of the Cinque Ports. Langhorn, p. 29., believes the word to have meant east men, and to have alluded to the east part of Northumbria.—Alford, in his annals, settles the question. A charter, in Dublet fixes them in Sussex. Offa by this confirms a grant of land, in the neighbourhood of Hastings, to the abbey of St. Denis; and styles Bertwald, the proprietor of Hastings and *Pevensey*, his *fidelis*.

[34] Mailros, 138. Sax. Chron. 61. Vit. Offæ, p. 15.

[35] Sax. Chron. 61. Matt. West. 279.

[36] Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, speaking of the immature fate of Offa's son, mentions, that pater suus pro confirmatione regni ejus multum sanguinem effudit. Ap. Malmsb. de Gest. p. 33.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

terbury, and other places, far beyond the limits of his inherited domains.[87]

777. Corresponds with Charlemagne.

Offa is distinguished above the other Anglo-Saxon kings who had preceded him in the octarchy, by commencing an intercourse with the continent. He had a correspondence with Charlemagne, which does credit to the Frankish sovereign and to himself. In one letter, Charlemagne communicates to him with perceptible exultation his success in procuring the continental Saxons to adopt Christianity. In another the Frankish emperor promises security to all pilgrims, and his especial protection and legal interference to all commercial adventurers, on their paying the requisite duties. He greets Offa with expressions of friendship, and sends him a belt, an Hungarian sword, and two silken cloaks.[88]

[87] Matt. West. 284. Dugdale Monasticon, i. p. 19. 62. 177. 184. Matt. West. p. 288., enumerates twenty-three counties which Offa governed. Amongst these, the districts of East Anglia, Essex, and part of Wessex and Northumbria, are recited.

[88] Du Chesne Scrip. Fr. vol. ii. p. 620. Malmsb. 32. In the second volume of Du Chesne's Hist. Franc. Scriptores, p. 686., is another letter from Charlemagne to Offa. The king states the *guilty* conduct of a Presbyter et Scottus, who had eaten meat in Lent. The king mentions that the clergy in France, for want of full evidence, had declined to pass sentence upon him; and adds, that, as he could not remain where he was, from the *infamy* of the thing; and lest the sacerdotal honour should be thought by the ignorant vulgar to be tarnished, and lest others should be induced to violate the sacred fast, Charlemagne thought it fittest to send him to abide the judgment of his bishop.

Another monument of their intercourse exists in a letter from Charlemagne to the Archbishop Athilhard, whom Alcuin styles the primate of Canterbury. In this letter the humanity of Charlemagne is nobly distinguished. It is in behalf of some exiles, for whom he entreats the prelate to intercede with Offa, that they may have leave to return to their country in peace, and secured from the oppression of injustice. He says, their lord, Vinhrinagstan, was dead, who he thinks would have proved faithful to his lord, if he might have remained in his country. "To escape the peril of death, he fled to

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

A DISCORD of some moment interrupted this amity. All intercourse between the two countries was reciprocally interdicted[39]; but the quarrel is not stated to have lasted long. Offa had also a quarrel with the pope. 777.

Offa's wars with the Britons.

THE wars of Offa with the Britons were at first to his disadvantage. Some branches of the Cymry penetrated in an incursion into Mercia. Their united attack drove the English from the Severn; they frequently repeated their devastations. Offa collected in greater number the forces of the Anglo-Saxons, and marched into Wales. The Britons, unable to withstand him, quitted the open country between the Severn and the Wye, and withdrew to their mountains. Impregnable among these natural fortresses, they awaited the return of the invaders, and then sallied out in new aggressions. To terminate these wasteful incursions, Offa annexed the eastern regions of Wales, as far as the Wye, to Mercia, planted them with Anglo-Saxons, and separated them from the Britons by a large trench and rampart, extending from the æstuary

His Dyke.

us, but was always ready to purge himself from all infidelity. We kept him with us not from enmity, but with the hope of producing a reconciliation. As to these his followers, if you can obtain their peace, let them remain in the country. But," adds this humane king, "if my brother answers harshly about them, send them to us uninjured. It is better to travel than to perish; it is better to serve in another country than to die at home. But I trust to the goodness of my brother, if you strongly intercede for them, that he may receive them kindly for love of us, or rather for the love of Christ."

The delicacy of this application is peculiar. He does not write to Offa, because he will not compromise his own dignity by subjecting it to a refusal, nor appear to dictate to another prince; he employs an honoured minister of peace; he applies to Offa the tender epithet of my brother; and he makes a denial almost impossible, by the disinterested humanity which he intends to show them, if Offa should be inexorable. 2 Du Chesne, p. 678.

[39] Alcuin ap. Malmsb. 32.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III. 777.

of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye.[40] It was carried through marshes, and over mountains and rivers, for an hundred miles, and was long celebrated under the name of Claudh Offa, or Offa's Dyke.[41] Its remains and direction are yet visible.[42] It was used for ages afterwards, as the boundary which determined the confines of England and Wales; a boundary jealously guarded with the most rigorous penalties.[43]

Offa's desire of reading is mentioned by Alcuin.[44]

The basest action of Offa was the murder of Ethelbert, king of East Anglia.

Offa's murder of Ethelbert.

At the close of Offa's reign, Ethelbert possessed the crown of East Anglia, a peaceful and intelligent prince, in the bloom of youth and beauty, interesting in his manners, and virtuous in his disposition. Invited or welcomed by Offa[45], he went to Mercia, for the purpose of receiving the hand of Etheldritha, the daughter of the Mercian king. He travelled with a splendid retinue. Offa received him with that distinction which was due to the allotted husband of his daughter. But be-

[40] Brut y Tywys. p. 473. Brut y Saeson, p. 474. Asser, de Gestis Elfredi, 10. Sim. Dunelm. p. 118. After these events the princes of Powys moved their royal seat from Pengwern, or Shrewsbury, to Mathraval in Montgomeryshire. Where the royal castle of Mathraval stood, a small farm house is the only building visible now.

[41] Lhwyd Comment. Brit. Descript. 42. — Almost all the cities and towns on its eastern side "in ton vel ham finientia habent." Ibid.

[42] See Gibson's Camden, p. 587.

[43] Jo. Sarisb. Polycrat. in his De nugis curialium, lib. vi. p. 184.

[44] Alcuin in a letter to him says, "It greatly pleases me that you have such an intention to read; that the light of wisdom may shine in your kingdom which is now extinguished in many places." He adds some good moral advice. Alc. Op. p. 1554.

[45] The welcome is affirmed by all. The invitation by Malmsbury, 29., and the author of the life of Offa, p. 23., and Hen. Silgrave, MSS. Cott. Cleop. A. 12.

Digitized by Google

fore the marriage was completed, Ethelbert was assassinated, and the father of his beloved commanded the murder. Though Offa had pledged his protection, had received the King of East Anglia as his guest, had introduced him to his daughter as her approved husband, and the nuptial feast had began, Offa is represented as having procured his assassination.[46] The favourable moment of annexing East Anglia to Mercia was a temptation which overpowered the feelings of the father and the man. The friends of Ethelbert fled in consternation. Offa invaded his dominions, and East Anglia was added to his conquests. 777.

Did such a complication of crimes benefit the perpetrator? Before two years elapsed, he sunk from his empire to his grave. Remorse embittered all the interval. His widowed daughter abandoned his court, fled into the marshes of Croyland, and pined away her life in mourning solitude[47]; his queen, the evil counsellor of his ambition, perished miserably[48]; the husband of another of his daughters was cut off in the same year with himself[49]; the other, who married Brihtric, died a marytr to vice and penury the most extreme, scorned and abhorred[50]; his son Ecgfrid, who succeeded him, Calamities of Offa's family.

[46] That Offa commanded the murder is expressly asserted by Ethelwerd, 840.; Hoveden, 410.; Huntingdon, 344.; Sax. Chron. 65.; Flor. Wig. 281.; Malmsb. de Pont. 287.; Bromton, 749.; Higden, 251.; Rad. Dicet. 446.; and Asseri Annal. 154. Their uniting evidence does away the attempt of Matt. West. p. 283., and the fabulous monk of St. Alban's in Vita Offæ, p. 23., who want to fix it solely on the queen. — Both these apologists admit that Offa immediately seized East Anglia; and such an action, after such a catastrophe, is among the most forcible evidences of its guilt and its motive.

[47] Ingulf. 7. Bromton, 752. Vit. Offæ, p. 24.

[48] Vit. Offæ, p. 25.

[49] Ethelred, the son of Moll.

[50] See further, note 58.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

was permitted to exist only 141 days[51]; and thus the race of Offa disappeared for ever.

784 Cynewulf of Wessex assassinated.

DURING the reign of Offa, the sceptre of Wessex had been swayed, since 755, by Cynewulf. He warred with the Britons successfully[52], and met Offa in the disastrous conflict at Bensington. After a reign of many years, he fell a victim to revenge and desperation. He endeavoured to expel Cyneheard, the brother of the deposed Sigebyrht; a suspicion that he was meditating retaliation, occasioned the attempt.[53] Cyneheard determined to prevent the blow; he watched the unguarded moment when the king with a few attendants visited a lady at Merton in Surrey; he collected about eighty desperadoes, hastened to the place, and surrounded the chamber to which the king had retired, before his friends were aware of his danger. The king quitted the apartment, and vigorously defended himself; he beheld Cyneheard, and, rushing forward, severely wounded him; but no courage could prevail against such numbers. Cynewulf was slain. Roused by the clamour of the struggle, his thanes hurried to the conflict. Safety and wealth were offered to them by the assassins; but no bribes could repress their loyal indignation; and they fell nobly by their master's side; one

[51] Bromton, 754. Hunt. 344. Ingulf. 6. Offa went to Rome before his death, and extended to his own dominions the liberality of Ina, called Romescot. It was with strict truth that the friend of the great Alfred mentions Offa with the epithet "universis circa se regibus et regionibus finitimis formidolosus rex." Asser de Reb. Gest. Elfredi, p. 10.

[52] Flor. Wig. 274. Sax. Chron. 57. Of Cornwall, I presume; for in his charter to the monastery at Wells, dated 766, he adduces among his motives to the donation pro aliqua vexatione inimicorum nostrorum Cornubiorum gentis. See it ap. Dugd. i. 186.

[53] Matt. West. 280. This author states, that Cyneheard had been banished.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

784.

British hostage only escaped, desperately wounded. In the morning, the dismal tidings had circulated; and the great officers of the royal household, Osric, the friend, and Weverth, the faithful minister of Cynewulf, with their attendants, rode to the town. Cyneheard lavished both promises and presents, if they would assist him to obtain the crown. The disinterested thanes disdained the favours of a murderer, forced an entrance with their battle-axes, and a deadly contest ensued, in which the guilty perished.[54]

The murderers punished.

Brihtric succeeds. 787.

Danes first land in England.

THIS melancholy catastrophe produced the dignity of Brihtric. He was of the race of Cerdic[55], and married Eadburga, the daughter of Offa. The year of his accession was distinguished as that in which the Danes are recorded by the Anglo-Saxon writers to have first landed on the English shore. The gerefa of the place went out to see the strangers, who had arrived with three vessels, and was instantly killed.[56] Their incursion was repeated on other parts of the island.

Vices of the Queen Eadburga.

THE wife of Brihtric, or Beorhtric, is expressed by Asser to have imitated the tyranny of her father, Offa; to have hated all to whom her husband was attached, and to have done whatever was odious to mankind. She became familiar with crimes which the gentleness of female nature never perpetrates till its moral sentiments have been erased. She accused to the king whomsoever her caprice disliked, and thus deprived them of life or power. When he refused the gratification to her malice, she used the secret poison.

[54] Sax. Chron. 59. 63. Flor. Wig. 278. Hunt. 343.
[55] Sax. Chron. 63.
[56] Sax. Chron. 64.; Flor. Wig. 280.; and see Ethelwerd.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

787. To one youth the king was so attached, that her arts were fruitlessly exerted to procure his disgrace. She mingled for him a poisoned cup. It was the destiny of Brihtric, that, by accident, he should drink the contents. Thus punished for his unjust compliances with the malignancy of Eadburga, he expired as well as the youth[57], and was succeeded by Egbert.

She poisons Brihtric.

She escapes to France. DRIVEN out of Wessex, the wretched woman sailed with great treasures to France, and presented herself to Charlemagne. With splendid presents she stood before the throne: "Choose, Eadburga," said the king, "which you prefer, me or my son."—"Your son," was her answer, "because he is youngest." The monarch tauntingly assured her, that if she had selected him, he should have transferred her to his son; but that as her election had been otherwise, she should have neither. He gave her what he thought better suited her immorality, the habit and discipline of a cloister; but even in this retreat she indulged her depravity, and was turned out of the society. In poverty and miserable vice she dragged on a loathed existence, and at last, accompanied by a little girl, she begged her daily bread at Pavia; and closed an abandoned life by a deplorable death.[58]

Her miserable end.

[57] Asser relates these incidents from the communications of his illustrious master: "Quod a domino meo Ælfredo Angul-saxonum rege veredico, etiam sæpe mihi referente audivi:" p. 10. The Saxon chronicle mentions Worr as the ealdorman who died with Brihtric, p. 68. Brihtric was buried in Tewkesbury. Chron. de Tewksb. MSS. Cott. Cleop. c. 3.

[58] Asser says he had this fact from many who had seen her, p. 12.—In 798, London was burnt, with many of its inhabitants. Chron. Pet. 10.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

The Reigns of EGBERT *and* ETHELWULF.

CHAP. XI.

Egbert's ancestors.

EGBERT, the most distinguished and successful king of all the Anglo-Saxon race before Alfred, was the son of Alcmund, or Ethelmund, the great grandson of Inigils, the brother of Ina. Alcmund was left early in his mother's care, and his sisters were sent into Saxony for their education, where they became religious.[1] Egbert received the instruction of the times, and his talents gave splendour to his youth. When Brihtric became king of Wessex, the popularity of Egbert excited his mistrust, and he projected his destruction. To avert the danger, Egbert fled to Offa. The messengers of Brihtric followed him; and, to debar the young exile from the friendship of Mercia, they solicited for their master the daughter of Offa. Eadburga was betrothed to Brihtric, and Egbert sailed to the coast of France, where he greatly improved his mind.[2]

787. Egbert's retreat wi Charlemagne.

IT was after 787, that he left Offa for the court of Charlemagne. This indefatigable monarch, whom Europe every year beheld in a new part of its varied climate, pouring his disciplined warriors

[1] Wallingford, 3 Gale, 531. See Thorn. 2.; x Scrip. 2211.; and 3 Lel. 55. The Saxon Chronicle makes the father of Egbert king of Kent, p. 63.; and Higden entitles him sub reguli, p. 252. So Rudborne. The eldest sons of the kings of Wessex seem, at this period, to have been always appointed kings of Kent, until the reign of Alfred.

[2] Malms. lib. ii. c. 1. p. 36. Hen. Silgrave, Cott. MSS. p. 12.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

on the powerful savage tribes, which swarmed between the German Ocean and the mouth of the
787. Danube, in the year 788 marched against the Sclavonians on the Baltic. Scarce had they submitted, but the Huns were invading him, and he was also summoned towards Naples by the hostilities of the eastern empire. He subdued the Avarians and the Huns, the modern Austrians and Hungarians. When Saxony revolted, he determined to extirpate the most hostile of its confederation. The fate of 30,000 men evinced the dreadful execution of his determination.

795. On his return from this expedition, he passed his winter at Aix-la-Chapelle, a place with which he was much delighted. In the subsequent years we find him at Paderborn, afterwards traversing the French coasts, visiting the diet at Mentz, and, in the year 800, marching into Italy through Suabia and Friuli. We may reasonably suppose that Egbert attended him in some of these expeditions, and that great activity, enlargement, and information of mind were acquired by the Anglo-Saxon prince during his asylum with the Frankish sovereign. Thus Egbert's exile and adversity became beneficial both to himself and to the country which he was soon called to govern.

800. Egbert returns to England.

It was in the year 800 that Egbert was summoned out of the French empire to the throne of England. As he was the only descendant of Cerdic that was in existence[3], his accession was highly popular in Wessex.

State of England.

At the period of his accession, the island, though nominally under an hexarchy, was fast verging

[3] Malmsbury, lib. i. c. 2. p. 16.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

800.

into a triarchy. The petty powers of Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, had already become the satellites of Mercia; Northumbria, occupied in producing and destroying a succession of usurpers and turbulent nobles, had ceased to molest her neighbours; Wessex had enlarged herself by the incorporation of Sussex; its population and wealth multiplied under the peaceable administration of Brihtric, and a series of able sovereigns had reduced the nobles of the land to an useful subordination. The force of Wessex was therefore, a well-organized concentration of various powers, ready to operate with all their energies for any great purpose to which they should be summoned.

At this crisis Egbert acceded. The friendship of Charlemagne had educated him to the arts of empire; and the studies cultivated at the Frankish court had excited his mind, and polished his manners.[4] From the example of the French emperor he learnt the difficult policy of governing with vigour and prudence, the discordant members of a great body politic. The character of Charlemagne was a mixture of cultivated intellect and barbarism, which was likely to have interested and improved the mind of Egbert; and in the wars of the Francs he must have imbibed a military knowledge superior to that of every Anglo-Saxon competitor.

His mild government completed the attachment

[4] Malmsbury says of the Francs, "This nation, from the activity of its powers and the urbanity of its manners, was decidedly the prince of all the western states;" he mentions that Egbert regnandi disciplinam a Francis acciperit, and that with them aciem mentis expediret et mores longè a gentilicia barbarie alienos indueret. Lib. ii. c. 1. p. 86.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

of his subjects, and the tranquillity of the first years of his reign fostered his growing strength.

800. Kenwulf in Mercia.

For the first nineteen years of Egbert's reign, Kenwulf continued to sit on the throne of Mercia. He had subdued Kent, and ruled Mercia and its appendages with an ability which suspended the ambition of the West-Saxon king. Kenwulf is mentioned with applause for his peacefulness, piety, and justice.[5] His ability was known to his contemporaries, and secured his repose.

813. Egbert defeats the Western Britons.

It was on the inferior Britons of the West, that Egbert first tried the efficacy of his military strength. He penetrated successfully into Devonshire and Cornwall; resistance was in vain; and he ravaged, unchecked, from the East to the West.[6]

819. Kenwulf's death.

The path to his greatness was laid open to Egbert by the death of Kenwulf.[7] The wisdom of this king had completed the efforts of Offa for the power of Mercia; and if his successors had been of equal energy, Wessex might not at this period have become its superior.

Rivalry of Wessex and Mercia.

But to such a degree of strength had these rival states respectively attained, that it was obvious a serious competition must soon arise for one to be sovereign of the whole. The humiliation of the other powers increased the rivalry of these. Two neighbouring co-equals in power cannot long exist in amity together, because man is too much a being of hope and envy, and too little appreciates tranquillity and content. By its political power,

[5] Ingulf. Hist. p. 6. rex justissimus. Chron. Pet. 10.

[6] Sax. Chron. 69. Flor. Wig. 285. Malmsb. 36. Ethelw. 840. In the year 816, the English school at Rome was burnt. Flor. Wig. 285.

[7] Ingulf. 7.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

819.

Mercia promised to win in the approaching race of supremacy; but Wessex was rising so fast into importance, that nothing less than a continuation of able government in Mercia could suppress its competition. Both had reached that point of power, at which the state that was first disquieted by the evils of a weak administration would inevitably fall under the pressure of the other.

EGBERT and Kenwulf governed their several kingdoms with such steady capacity, that, during their co-existence, the balance was not determined. If Kenwulf had been the survivor, and minors or incapable men, harassed by factious chiefs, had succeeded to the throne of Egbert, then Mercia would have acquired the monarchy of England; but the coveted distinction was allotted to Wessex, and the causes powerful enough to reduce a nation were suffered to operate in Mercia.

The son of Kenwulf murdered.

KENWULF left his son, Kinelm, a child of seven years of age, the heir to his crown, under the tutelage of his marriageable daughters. The eldest of these, Windreda, hopeful of acquiring a permanent authority, resolved on her brother's death. He was carried by his foster-father, under pretence of hunting, into a wood, and there murdered. Her crime failed to profit her. Her uncle, Ceolwulf, took the crown; in his second year he was driven out by Beornwulf.[8]

Ceolwulf.

Beornwulf, a weak prince.

THESE distractions checked Mercia in her career of dignity. Beornwulf became by his usurpation rather the king of his party than sovereign of the united population of his territory. He had ac-

[8] Ingulf. 7. Flor. Wig. 286.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

819. quired his throne by violence; yet if his skill had been equal to the crisis, he might have consolidated his power, but he is characterised as a fool, rich and powerful, though of no regal ancestry.[9] With giddy precipitancy he plunged into a personal competition with Egbert, and linked the fate of Mercia in his own.[10]

823. Beornwulf makes war on Egbert.

It was in 823 that Beornwulf rushed to that collision, which the wary Egbert seems to have been reluctant to hazard. The twenty-three years' forbearance of the West-Saxon prince indicates no inordinate ambition; but the hostilities of Beornwulf roused him into activity. At Wilton the competition between the two states was decided.[11] The superior strength of the forces of Mercia was balanced by the skill of Egbert. A furious battle ensued, which the rival armies maintained with great obstinacy; but at length Egbert conquered with great slaughter, and Beornwulf fled in irremediable confusion.

Egbert's victory.

Subdues Kent and Essex.

Egbert derived from his victory all the consequences of which it was so fruitful: he beheld the favourable moment for breaking the power of Mercia for ever, and he seized it with avidity. He dispatched his son, Ethelwulf, and the warlike

[9] Ingulf. 7. A Bernulpho quodam fatuoso et divitiis ac potentia pollenti, in nullo que lineam regalem contigente expulsus est.

[10] In 823, a battle occurred at Gafelford, or Camelford, in Cornwall. Sax. Chron. 70. Flor. Wig. 287. The men of Devonshire are particularized as the combatants who conflicted with the Cornish Britons. The pieces of armour, rings, and brass furniture for horses, dug up here, and the local tradition of a bloody battle, may be collateral evidences of this struggle; but they are also claimed by Leland as the attestations of the celebrated fight of Camlan, which he places on this spot. Whether Egbert or his generals commanded against the Britons, is not decisively ascertained.

[11] Sax. Chron. 70. Flor. Wig. 287. Hunt. 344.

Digitized by Google

bishop and able statesman, Ealstan, with a competent army, into Kent, who drove the petty sovereign that had ruled there, the dependent of Mercia, over the Thames[12]; and then Kent, and its neighbour, Essex, became for ever united to the crown of Wessex. CHAP. XI. 823.

Egbert pursued his scheme of aggrandisement with careful policy. He forbore to invade Mercia; for though it had been defeated, it abounded yet with courageous soldiery; and Egbert seems to have been cautious of putting too much into hazard. Instead of attacking Beornwulf in Mercia, Egbert fomented the discontent with which the East Anglians endured the Mercian yoke; by promise of support he excited East Anglia to revolt, and thus engaged his rival in a new warfare.[13] Incites the East Anglians against Mercia.

Beornwulf went in anger to chastise the East Anglians. His incapacity again disgraced him with a defeat: he fell in the contest[14]; and was succeeded by Ludecan, who again led the forces of Mercia against East Anglia; but he was as unfortunate as his predecessor, and found a grave where he had hoped for empire. Wiglaf, the governor or prince of Worcestershire, succeeded.[15] 825. Mercia's disasters.

The views of Egbert were now accomplished. An important passage of Ingulfus pours light on the policy of Egbert. He says that the two usurpers, Beornwulf and Ludecan, by their imprudence destroyed all the military strength of

[12] Sax. Chron. 70. Wallingf. 534. Hunt. 345. Flor. Wig. 287. The year 824 is remarked by continental annalists to have had a winter so extremely severe, that not only animals, but many of the human race, perished in the excessive cold. See Annal. Fuldenses. 6 Bouquet's Recueil, p. 208. The annals add a description of a huge stone which fell from the air!

[13] Ingulf, 7. [14] Ibid. Chron. Petr. 12. [15] Ibid.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Mercia, which had been most numerous and victorious.[16] For this event Egbert seems to have waited; and as soon as he found that Mercia had exhausted herself against others, his caution was thrown aside, and his officers marched his army immediately into Mercia. Wiglaf, attacked before he could recruit his forces, fled from his new dominion, and concealed himself from the eager searches of Egbert in the monastery of Croyland. That interresting character, Ethelburga, widowed in the hour of the marriage-feast by her father Offa's crime, sheltered the fugitive prince in her respected cell.[17] How painfully must she have moralised on the deed which had not only destroyed her happiness, but had contributed in its consequences to the ruin of Mercia!

825. Egbert invades Mercia.

827. Wiglaf submits to him.

THE negotiations of the venerable abbot of Croyland preserved Wiglaf, but completed the inevitable degradation of Mercia. Egbert agreed to the king's continuing on the throne as the tributary vassal of Wessex. The expressions of Wiglaf, in the charter of Croyland, six years after this pacification, are, "I have procured it to be confirmed by my lord, Egbert, king of Wessex, and his son." — "In the presence of my lords, Egbert and Athelwulf."[18] — The payment of the tribute is attested by Ingulf.[19] The submission of East Anglia was consequential to the humiliation of Mercia.

[16] Regno vehementer oppresso, totam militiam ejus, quæ quondam plurima extiterat, et victoriosissima, sua imprudentia perdiderat. Ing. 7.

[17] Ing. 7.

[18] Per dominum meum Egbertum regem West Saxoniæ et Athelwlphum filium ejus illud obtinui confirmari. Ing. 9. — In presentia dominorum meorum Egberti regis West Saxoniæ et Athelwlphi filii ejus. Ing. 10.

[19] Promissa tributi annualis pensione. Ing. 8.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

NORTHUMBRIA had not yet felt his power. Eardulf, whom we left reigning at the beginning of this the ninth century, had assumed a hostile posture against Kenwulf of Mercia; but the clergy interposed, and procured a reconciliation.[20] In 806, Eardulf was driven out, and the province continued without a king for a long time.[21] Alfwold is mentioned afterwards, as a fleeting monarch of two years; and Eanred, the son of Eardulf, then succeeded for thirty-three years, and transmitted it to his son.[22] It was against Eanred that Egbert marched, after the conquest of Mercia. The Northumbrian prince was too prudent to engage his turbulent and exhausted kingdom in a war with Egbert: he felt the imperious necessity, and obeyed it. At Dore, beyond the Humber, he met the West-Saxon prince, and amicably acknowledged his superiority.[23]

827. Egbert invades Northumbria.

Its submission.

THE Anglo-Saxon octarchy thus subdued, he turned the tide of conquest towards Wales. With a numerous army he penetrated to Snowdon, the Parnassus of the Cambrian bards. The same successes attended his arms in North Wales, and he penetrated to Denbighshire, and from thence to Anglesey.[24] He appointed his son Ethelwulf king of Kent.[25]

828. Wales overrun.

THE only enemy that baffled the genius of Egbert was the Danes, who continued their depre-

832. The Danes invade Egbert.

20 Sim. Dunelm. de Gestis Reg. Angl. 117.

21 Chron. Mailros, 141.

22 Sim. Dunelm. de Dunel. Eccles. 13.

23 Sax. Chron. 71. Flor. Wig. 288.

24 Brut y Saeson, 475. Brut y Tywysog. 392. Sax. Chron. 72. Ethelwerd, 841.

25 So he says in a charter at Rochester, dated "Ethelwulph, quem regem constituemus in Cantia." Thorpe, Reg. Reff. p. 22.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

dations; and probably under the command of that celebrated sea-king, Ragnar Lodbrog, whose actions will be more distinctly considered.[26] They ravaged the Isle of Sheppey, and in the next year defeated Egbert at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire.[27] This disaster, perhaps, occasioned that council which Wiglaf, in his charter to Croyland, mentions to have met this year at London, for the purpose of deliberating on the Danish depredations.[28] The efficacy of the measures adopted by the council appeared at Hengston Hill, in Cornwall. The Danes landed in this part of the island, and the Cornish Britons, from fear or voluntary policy, entered into offensive alliance with them against Egbert. The king of Wessex defeated their combined forces with great slaughter.[29]

832.

835.

836. Egbert's death.

After a reign of prosperity seldom rivalled, Egbert died full of glory.[30] He had made all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms subordinate to his own; but the tale, that he assembled the Anglo-Saxon states, and abolishing the distinction of Saxons and Angles, and all provincial appellations, commanded the island to be called England, and procured himself to be crowned and denominated

[26] See the next book, ch. 3. [27] Sax. Chron. 72.

[28] Ingulf. 10. (Ubi omnes congregati fuimus pro concilio capiendo contra Danicos piratas littora Angliæ assidue infestantes.)

[29] Sax. Chron. 72.

[30] Sax. Chron. 73. Flor. Wig. 291. Higden, 253. Chron. Petri de Burgo, 13. The Chronicle of Mailros says in 838, p. 142. The Asserii Annales, 839, p. 155. Wallingford, 837, p. 531. On the 26th January, in the year 839, an unusual inundation of the sea devastated all Frisia, so that it was almost on a level with the copious masses of sands, called there Dunos (Downs). Animals, men, and houses, were destroyed by the waters. The number of the inhabitants known to have perished in the deluge, was 2437. Annal. Bertiniani.

Digitized by Google

king of England, seems not to be entitled to our belief.[31] CHAP. XI.

As the new enemies from the Baltic, who had begun to appear in England, for the first time, at the end of the eighth and in the ninth centuries, were not duly noticed by our historians before the 836.

[31] I was induced, as early as I began this work, to doubt this popular tale, by observing these circumstances: — 1. That although if such an act had taken place, the legal title of Egbert and his successors would have been rex Anglorum; yet that neither he nor his successors, till after Alfred, generally used it. In his charters, Ethelwulf always signs king of the West Saxons; so do his three sons; so Alfred; and in his will he says, I, Alfred, of the West Saxons, king. Asser, the friend of this king, styles Ethelwulf and his three sons always kings of the West Saxons, p. 6—21. It is with Alfred that he begins to use a different title; he names him Angul Saxonum rex. — 2. Egbert did not establish the monarchy of England: he asserted the predominance of Wessex over the others, whom he defeated or made tributary, but he did not incorporate East Anglia, Mercia, or Northumbria. It was the Danish sword which destroyed these kingdoms, and thereby made Alfred the monarch of the Saxons: accordingly, Alfred is called primus monarcha by some; but, in strict truth, the monarchy of England must not even be attributed to him, because Danish sovereigns divided the island with him, and occupied all the parts which the Angles had peopled, except Mercia. It was Athelstan, who destroyed the Danish sovereignty, that may, with the greatest propriety, be entitled primus monarcha Anglorum; and accordingly Alured of Beverly so intimates him, p. 93. Totius Angliæ monarchiam primus Anglo-Saxonum obtinuit Edelstanus. — 3. The important incidents of the coronation, and change of name, are not mentioned by the best writers. The Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, Asser, Ethelwerd, Ingulf, Huntingdon, Hoveden, Bromton, Malmsbury, the Chronicle of Mailros, of Peterborough, and Matthew of Westminster, say nothing about it. — 4. Why should Egbert, a Saxon, have given the Angles a preference in the royal title? The fact seems to be, that the people of the provinces colonised by the Angles had been long called Angli. Bede and Boniface, in the century before Egbert, so call them. There is, however, one charter that makes an exception. In one of those at Rochester, Egbert is called rex Anglorum. Thorpe, p. 22. Yet his son Ethelwulf does not continue the title, but uses that of occidentalium Saxonum, p. 23.; which proves, that if the other charter with the Anglorum be a genuine one, yet that this word could not have arisen from any legal change of title, or his son would have continued it. So far as such a phrase was applied to Egbert from his victories, it was a just compliment; but it is no evidence of his assumption of it as his legal title.

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

886.

publication of this work, it will be necssary, for the more perfect understanding of the events which they caused, to take a review of the political state of Scandinavia, and of its customs at this period.

SAXON OCTARCHY.

It may gratify the wishes of some readers to have the successions of the kings of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy enumerated in their chronological order. I take the chronology from the Saxon chronicle, when it occurs there. My other authorities are, Alured of Beverley, and Henry of Huntingdon, for the successions, and the latter, sometimes, for the duration of the reigns. Every notice in our old writers cannot be minutely reconciled on the length of each reign. I have selected what I thought to be, on the whole, the most probable.

KENT.

449 Hengist lands
488 Esca, or Æric succeeds
512 Octa
542 Eormenric
560 Æthelbyrht
616 Eadbald
640 Ercenberht
664 Ecbyrht
673 Lother
685 Edric. Al. B. 81.
694 Wihtred
725 Eadberht
748 Æthelbyrht
760 Edbert Pren
Cuthred. Al. B. 81.
Baldred
784 Ealhmund
794 Eadbryht.

SUSSEX.

477 Ella lands
Scissa
Cæteros oblivio mersit. Al. Bev. 82.

WESSEX.

495 Cerdic lands, reigned from 519
534 Cynric
560 Ceawlin
591 Ceol, or Ceolric
597 Ceolwulf
611 Cynegils
643 Cenwalh
672 Sexburh
674 Æscwine
676 Centwine
685 Ceadwalla
688 Ina
728 Æthelheard
741 Cuthred
754 Sigebert
755 Cynewulf
784 Brihtric
806 ECGBRIGHT, or Egbert. S. C. 15.

Digitized by Google

NORTHUMBRIA.

Bernicia.	*Deira.*
547 Ida	560 Ælla. A. B. 78.
560 Adda	
567 Clappa	590 Edwin, expelled by Ethelric
572 Heodwulf	
573 Freodwulf	
580 Theodric	
588 Æthelric	
593 Æthelfrith	
617 Eadwin	
634 Eanfrith	634 Osric
634 Oswald	644 Oswin
642 Oswy	
670 Ecverth, or Ecgferth	
685 Aldfreth, or Alfred	
705 Osred	
716 Conred	
Osric	
731 Ceolwulf	
738 Edberht	
757 Osulf	
759 Moll Æthelwold	
765 Alhred	
774 Æthelred	
778 Alfwold	
789 Osred	
790 Æthelred	
Osbald	
795 Eardwulf	
Osbert	Ella.

MERCIA.

586 Creoda, or Crida	794 Egverth
Pibba	794 Cenwulf, or Kenulf
626 Penda	Kenelm
655 Peada	819 Ceolwulf
656 Wulfhere	821 Beornwulf
675 Æthelred	Ludican
704 Cenred	828 Wiglaf
709 Ceolred	Beornwulf
716 Æthelbald	Buthred. S. C.
755 Beornred	Ceolwulf. Al. Bev. 88.
755 Offa	

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

East Anglia.

Uffa
Titilus
Redwald
Eorpwald
Sigebert
Egric
Anna
Edelhere
Alfwold
Aldulf
Beorna
Edelred
Egelbrict
Edmund
Guthric
Eohric
Eadmund, slain by Inguar.

Essex.

Eswyn
Sledda
Sabert
Sexred and Seward
Sigbert Parvus
Sigebert
Suithelin
Sebbi and Sighere
Offa
Selred
Swictred
Sigeric
Sigered
Guthrum. Al. Bev. 85.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

The Political State of NORWAY, SWEDEN, *and* DENMARK, *in the Eighth Century.*

CHAP. I.

ALTHOUGH popular language, seldom accurate, has given the denomination of Danes to the invaders of England, they were composed of the nations who lived in the regions now known by the general appellations of Sweden and Norway, as well as of the inhabitants of Zealand and Jutland. Of these, the Swedes were the earliest civilised, and seem to have first abandoned the system of maritime piracy. The Norwegians continued their aggressions, though at long intervals, to the year wherein this history ends. The Danes, who headed the most terrible of the invasions, were also the most successful. Under Sweyn, Canute, and his children, they obtained the government of Britain.

THE general aspect of the north, in the eighth century, was remarkable for two peculiarities, which were fitted to produce an age of piracy. These were, the numerous petty kings who ruled in its various regions, and the sea-kings who swarmed upon the ocean.

State of Norway.

NORWAY, whose broken coast stretches along a tumultuous ocean, from the rocks of the Baltic into the arctic circle, was the most sterile of all

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

the regions of the north. Its rugged mountains, and intolerable cold, were unfriendly to agricultural cultivation; but they nurtured a hardy and vigorous race, who, possessing no luxuries, feared no invasion, but poured their fleets on other coasts, to seize the superfluities which happier climates produced.[1] The navigator whom Alfred consulted and employed, describes this region, which he calls Northmanna land, as very long and very small. "All that man may use for pasture or plough lieth against the sea; and even this in some places very rocky. Wild moors lie against the east, and along the inhabited lands. In these moors the Finnas dwell. The cultivated land is broadest towards the east, but becomes continually smaller as it stretches towards the north."[2] Ohthere added, that the "moors were in some places so broad, that a man would be two weeks in travelling over them; in others but six days."[3]

FROM these descriptions we may remark, that the natural state of the country favoured maritime depredations. The population was along the sea. The natives were hardy, and their subsistence scanty. Compelled by their penury, they roamed largely abroad, and returned, when plunder had enriched them.[4]

NORWAY, in the eighth century, was divided among numerous sovereignties, called fylki, which

[1] Adam Bremen. Historia Ecclesiastica, lib. iv. c. 96. p. 71. ed. Lindenbrog. Franc. 1630.

[2] See Ohthere's narration, inserted by Alfred in his Saxon translation of Orosius, p. 24. ed. Lond. 1773. The land subjected to human culture, he describes as about 60 miles broad in the eastward, about 30 in the middle; and northward, where smallest, it might be three miles to the moors. Ibid.

[3] Ohthere, ibid.

[4] Adam Brem. p. 71.

Digitized by Google

an Icelandic Saga defines to have been a province which could furnish twelve ships, containing each sixty or seventy well-armed men.[5] Sometimes every fylki had an independent king. Sometimes more than one were under the same ruler.[6] The chorographical description of Norway enumerates twenty-two of these fylki, besides the fylki of Trondheim, which contained eight more.[7] The number of sovereignties probably varied according to the ambition and success of the several chiefs. The Hervarar Saga mentions, that at one period there were twelve kingdoms in Norway.[8] In the ninth century they were very numerous. Snorre, the very ancient and most valuable historiographer of Norway[9], brings all the fylki kings to our view, in his history of Harald Harfragre, the descendant of a petty prince in the southern parts of Scandinavia, who acceded in 862.[10] Harald swore to subdue all these little sovereigns, as Gormo had already conquered those of Denmark,

[5] Olaf Tryggva-son's Saga, c. 41. Stephanius says, that the ancient Danes used the word fylki to signify a province now called Lœn; but so populous as to furnish an army. In each of these a sovereign governed. Note in Saxon. Gram. p. 118. ed. Hafn. 1644.

[6] Olaf's Saga, p. 97.

[7] Stephanius recapitulates them, p. 118.

[8] C. 18. p. 221. This Saga, whose author is unknown, is a kind of Icelandic Epopea. The original was published with a vernacular translation and Latin notes, by Verelius, in 1672. The last edition is valuable for its Latin version; but it has omitted, I think, with a diminution of its utility, and with injustice to Verelius, his learned notes. Some might have been retrenched, but the great body of them ought not to have been characterised as "non momentosæ."

[9] Snorre Sturleson was born at Hvam, in West Iceland, 1178. In 1213 he was made supreme judge of Iceland. He was a poet as well as an historian. His moral character was not so distinguished as his genius. He was killed at Reickholt, in his sixty-third year. See his Life, prefixed to Schöning's edition of his Heimskringla, or Historia Regum Norvegicorum. Havn. 1777.

[10] Annales Islandici vetustissimi, 2 Langbeck's Script. Dan. p. 186.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

and Eric those of Sweden. He accomplished his vow. By his first efforts he destroyed the kings who governed in the eight fylki of Trondheim, and reduced these fylki under his dominion.[11] The rest of his life was chiefly occupied by his wars with the other. The struggle ended in his uniting them all under one monarchy.[12]

State of Sweden.

SKIRTED by the Alps of Norway, Sweden was distinguished for its fertility, wealth, and commerce.[13] Its population was numerous, warlike, and hospitable.[14] The name of Sweden, though now applied to the whole region governed by the Swedish monarch, was in ancient times restricted to the territory about Upsal.[15] Before the eighth century, it contained many provincial sovereigns, called Herads Konungr, of whom the king of Upsal was the chief. As cultivation spread, and deserts were converted into fields, new kingdoms rose.[16] Nineteen of these puny kingdoms are enumerated.[17] The king of Upsal, subjecting these inferior rulers, received the denomination of Thiod

[11] Snorre, Haralld's Saga, c. 8. p. 81.

[12] See Snorre, Haralld's Saga, p. 83—112. The last chapters of the Ynglinga Saga are on the immediate ancestors of Harald, who sprang from the Ynglingi of Upsal.

[13] Adam Brem. 68. Rembert, who obtained the archbishopric of Hamburg in 865, has left us some valuable expressions about Birca, which he calls the port of Sweden. He says, Ibi multi essent negotiatores divites et abundantia totius boni atque pecunia thesaurorum multa. Vita Anfgar. 1 Langb. 459.

[14] Adam Brem. p. 68. He says, the Swedes not only thought it a disgrace to refuse hospitality to the traveller, but they contended for the honour of entertaining him. Ibid. The Swedes had as many wives as they could maintain. Ibid.

[15] Snorre calls this part Swithiod. He places here the Ynglingi, whose succession Ivar Vidfadme disturbed. Adam Brem. also distinguishes Suedia from the adjoining provinces of Gothland, p. 68.

[16] Snorre, Ynglinga Saga, c. 40. p. 48.

[17] In Messenii Scond. Illust. i. p. 7.

Digitized by Google

Kongr.[18] Ingialld, who perished in the invasion Ivar Vidfadme, destroyed by treachery twelve of the petty kings.[19] The king of Upsal received tribute from the rest, who were thence denominated Skatte Kongar, tributary kings.[20] But these subordinate rulers sometimes amassed so much wealth by piracy, as to be more powerful than the superior lord.[21] Sweden had not a very extensive population, till after the beginning of the eighth century: In the preceding age it was so full of woods and deserts, that it required many days' journey to pass over them. The father of Ingialld exerted himself to convert many forests and heaths into arable land.[22] He made roads through parts which no human foot had explored; and by his wise industry, great extents of country were adorned for the first time by the cottages, corn, and people of a flourishing cultivation.[23] This continent was, however, still so little peopled, that Olaf, the son of Ingialld, flying from Ivar, in the eighth century, found the country from the west of the kingdom of Upsal, to the Vener lake, an uninhabited forest. By the axe and by fire, he

[18] Verelius in Got. et Rol. p. 87. I observe in Snorre, that the ancient title of the kings of Sweden was Drottnar (lord). Dyggvi was first saluted Konungur (king), c. 20. p. 24. His mother was the daughter of Dan the Magnificent, a quo Daniæ ortum est nomen, ibid. Snorre says, the Swedes call him their drottinn, who takes the skattgiafr, the tribute, from them, c. 11. p. 15.

[19] Snorre, Yngl. c. 43. p. 53.

[20] Peringskiold Monum. Upl. 10. He calls the kings of Upsal Enwalds, or Ofwer Konungar. The arms of Upland were a golden apple, or globe, surrounded with a belt, in allusion to the monarchy. Ibid.

[21] Verelius Got. et Rolf. 75.

[22] Snorre, Ynglinga Saga, c. 37. p. 45.

[23] Snorre, p. 45. Loccenius, with truer chronology than others, places Aunund immediately before the father of Ragnar Lodbrog. Hist. Suec. p. 41.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

cleared the regions about the river, which runs into the lake; and the province and kingdom of Vermaland, under his auspices, arose.[24] It was not until the ninth century, that Jamtia and Helsingia, the two northern provinces of Sweden, received a permanent colony. Men, flying from the tyranny of the preponderant sovereign, levelled the woods, and spread themselves over the district.[25] It seems to have been general throughout the north, that the interior parts of every country were wild solitudes. The sea-coasts were peopled; but as the natives undervalued agriculture, the adventurous spirits plunged into piracy, and the rest, addicted to hunting and pasturage, made few efforts to remove the frightful forests and extensive marshes which every where forbad their occupation.[26] Sweden was for a long time a favourite prey to the pirates of Denmark and the Baltic.[27] In the eighth century, the Upsal kingdom was conquered by Ivar Vidfadme, the little potentate of Scania, whose father was one of the chiefs destroyed by Ingialld.[28] Upsal afterwards continued to increase in its power and preponderance.

State of Denmark.

THE country of the Danes was composed of islands, which an unquiet ocean separated, and of the peninsula Jutland, which is almost insulated by its numerous bays. Of the Danish islands, Fionia was remarkable for its Odinsee, the

[24] Snorre, Yng. c. 46. p. 55.

[25] Snorre gives the history of these colonisations in his Saga Hakonar Goda, c. 14. p. 137. Verelius cites the Olaf Saga on the same fact, in Goth. et Rolf. p. 15.

[26] Verelius, Goth. et Rolf. 13. Hence the Suerris-Saga says, that travelling was very difficult, because on the melting of the ice and snows upon the rivers and lakes, the road must then be taken through pools, marshes, and trackless woods. Verel. ib. p. 14.

[27] Snorre, p. 43, 44. [28] Ibid. p. 53.

Digitized by Google

place in Denmark to which Odin went out of Saxony, after his reputed emigration from the Tanais.[29] It became a great city. The island was very fertile, but its coasts were full of pirates.[30]

ZEALAND was distinguished amidst the other isles for its magnitude, and its ancient metropolis, Lethra, whose sovereign was superior to the other kings who governed in the various provinces of the Danes.[31] Jutland, which extended from the Angles to the Sound, constituted a principal part of the Danish strength. Its soil was sterile, but the country upon the rivers was cultivated; and the most frequented cities were on the arms of the

[29] Snorre, p. 9. Odins-ey means Odin's island. Odin afterwards moved into Sweden, built a temple, and founded a city at Sigtun. Ibid. He is usually placed before the Christian æra; but the Saxon Genealogies make him above 200 or 300 years more recent. These are entitled to much notice, because the Saxon annals are far more accurate and precise than the Northern. They were also committed much earlier to writing. These make Cerdic, in 495, the ninth descendant from Odin (Sax. Chron. 15); Ida, in 547, the tenth (Ibid. 19.); Ella, in 560, the eleventh (p. 20.). If we reckon each generation at twenty-five years, as a fair average, then, according to Cerdic's genealogy, Odin will be placed 270 after Christ; according to Ida's, 290 A. C.; according to Ella's, 285 A. C. This position of Odin, by the Saxon chroniclers, has sometimes suggested to me the probability, that Odin's famous emigration from the Euxine, was no other than the daring voyage of the Francs from the Euxine, which occurred between 270 and 280 A. C., and which is stated before, p. 142. It is a coincidence, that Snorre places his first conquests in Saxony; for the Francs landed about Frisia, and immediately after that, the sea was covered with Frankish and Saxon pirates. Odin is also said by the Northern traditions to have fled from the Romans; but no other flight than the Frankish voyage is noticed by the Latin writers. The Saxon piracies show, that the Frankish voyage gave a new impulse to society in the north.

[30] Adam Brem. 64.

[31] On Lethra and its topography, see Stephanius in Sax. p. 74. It was in the middle of the island, not far from Roschild. Sveno, who lived in 1186, says that this famous city had in his time so declined, that inter abjectissima ferme vix colitur. Hist. Reg. Dan. 1 Langb. 45. Roschild became afterwards the metropolis.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

sea, which ran into it. The rest was made up of vast solitudes and briny marshes, like all the north in this savage and calamitous period. It abounded with uninhabited forests, which concurred with the fens to keep the interior unpeopled. Hence the maritime coasts, though full of incessant danger, from the pirates, were the parts frequented.[32]

THE Danes also occupied Scania, on the Scandinavian continent. It was their richest province.[33] This peninsula was almost an island; a tract of land, composed of deep forests and rugged mountains, divided it from Gothland.[34] It produced Ivar, the king whose invasion destroyed the dynasty of the Ynglingi at Upsal, and who occupied part of England.[35] Saxo mentions Hallandia and Blekingia as Danish possessions.[36]

WULFSTAN, a navigator with whom Alfred conversed about the north-eastern countries of the Baltic, enumerated the isles of Langoland, Leland, Falster, and Sconey, as belonging at that period to Denemearca.[37] The German chronicles at this time generally mean Jutland when they speak of Denmark, but the isles seem to have always formed an important part of the Danish population.[38]

[32] Adam Brem. 63. Jutland was anciently called Reidgotaland. Torfæus, Series Reg. Dan. 86, 87. The rest of Denmark was called Ey-gotaland, the insular Gothland. Ibid. 83. 87.

[33] Knytlinga Saga. Worm. Mon. Dan. App. p. 35.

[34] Adam, 64. In his time it had become very opulent.

[35] Snorre, p. 53, 54.

[36] In his preface he mentions the rock in Blekingia, so famous for its surprising inscriptions. He says, lib. vii. p. 138., Harald Hyldetand, as a monument to his father, caused his actions to be described on it. Wormius relates what remains of it. Monum. Dan. p. 221.

[37] Alfred's Orosius, p. 25.

[38] They were anciently called Witahedh, or Vitaslett. Verelius, Hist. Suio-Goth. 16. Peter Olaus says, that the name Dania primo et principaliter, comprehended the islands. Chron. 1 Langb. 83.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. I.

DENMARK was anciently possessed by many contemporary kings. The Knytlinga Saga, after enumerating the districts which Denmark contained in the time of Canute, adds, that although then under one sovereign, they had been formerly divided into many kingdoms.[39] According to this document, Jutland contained five of these Konga-ryki, at Sleswick, Ripen, Arhusan, Wiburg, and Hording.[40] The islands, and the continental provinces of Scania and Hallandia, had also their respective sovereigns, among whom the king of Lethra appears the most ancient and the most [41] powerful. These petty kings were styled Fylki Kongr, people, or provincial kings.[42] Ambition, before the eighth century, had diminished the number of the rival thrones. Two monopolised Jutland; Fionia, Seeland, and Scania, had each [43] another. This number also lessened; and at the period of their first aggression on England, the Danish royalty was confined to a king in Jutland, and one over the isles. Soon afterwards one monarcha commanded the whole. Gormo Grandævus, who

[39] Knytlinga Saga. Wormius, App. 36.

[40] In Canute's time the proportionate importance of these provinces may be inferred from the war-ships they furnished to the king. Heida bay, containing 350 kyrckna, or parishes, provided 130 ships. Ripen, 324 parishes, 110 or 120 ships. Arhusen, 210 parishes, 90 ships. Wiburg, 250 parishes, 100 ships. Hording, 160 parishes, 50 ships. Fionia, 300 parishes, 100 ships. Zealand, 309 churches, 120 ships. Scania, 353 churches, 150 ships. Worm. p. 34, 35.

[41] Snorre generally calls the Danish kings, kings of Hleidra, as p. 9. 17. 41. 43, &c. Stephanius says, ab hac Lethra Daniæ reges in antiquissimis monumentis semper nominantur Kongar aff Ledru, p. 74.

[42] Stephan. p. 103. Verelius informs us, that fylking is an embodied army, fylke a province furnishing a fylking, and fylke king its sovereign. In Got. et Rol. p. 27.

[43] Anon. Roskild. Chron. 1 Langb. 374. To the same purpose Stephanius, p. 103.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

lived in the end of the ninth century, is stated to have destroyed the other reguli.[44]

In speaking of kings and kingdoms, we use words of swelling sound, and magnificent import. Splendour, extensive dominion, pomp, power, and venerated dignity, are the majestic images which arise in our minds when we hear of thrones. But we must dismiss from our thoughts the fascinating appendages to modern royalty, when we contemplate the petty sovereigns of the North. Some of their kingdoms may have equalled an English county in extent, but many would have been rivalled by our hundreds. Seated in their rural halls, with a small band of followers scattered about, these northern fylki kings were often victims to pirates who assailed them. They had neither castles, cities, nor defensive fortifications.[45] Even the Thiod-Kongr, the preponderant ruler, sometimes fell before one of his inferiors whom plunder had enriched.[46]

The more settled kings of Denmark became known more distinctly to us in the time of Charlemagne. During his life, Godfrid reigned in Jutland, who had subdued the Frisians, and also the Obotriti and a part of the Slavi. He threatened Charlemagne with war. He was succeeded by Hemming, his cousin, who made peace with

[44] Torfæus Hist. Norv. i. p.410. Snorre intimates as much. Harald's Saga, c.3. p.78.

[45] We have a remarkable instance of this in Birca, the port and chief commercial emporium of Sweden. Rembert, who lived about 865, states this Birca to have been so defenceless, that on the approach of the Danes, the people fled from it to a neighbouring civitatem. This civitas was also non multum firma. They offered 120 pounds of silver to save Birca. Ansch. vita, p. 460. 1 Langb.

[46] Verelius in Hervarar Saga, 142.

Digitized by Google

the Frankish monarch, and the Eyder was established as their common boundary. On Hemming's death, the Danish sovereignty was contested between Sigefrid and Ring, in whose warfare 11,000 men with both the competitors perished.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

The Sea-Kings and Vikingr of the North.

BOOK IV.

The sea-kings.

When we review these kings and sub-kings of the North, we behold only a part of its political situation. There were also sovereigns who possessed neither country nor regular subjects, and yet filled the regions adjacent with blood and misery. The Sea-kings of the North were a race of beings whom Europe beheld with horror. Without a yard of territorial property, without any towns, or visible nation[1], with no wealth but their ships, no force but their crews, and no hope but from their swords, the sea-kings swarmed on the boisterous ocean, and plundered in every district they could approach. Never to sleep under a smoky roof, nor to indulge in the cheerful cup over a hearth[2], were the boasts of these watery sovereigns, who not only flourished in the plunder of the sea and its shores, but who sometimes amassed so much booty, and enlisted so many followers, as to be able to assault provinces for permanent conquest. Thus Haki and Hagbard were sea-kings; their reputation induced many bands of rovers to join

[1] Multi enim reges hinc fuere maritimi (Sæ-konungar) qui maximis quidem copiis sed nulli præerant regioni. Snorre, Yngl. Saga, c. 34. p. 43. Multi insuper qui nec ditiones nec subditos habebant sed piratica tantum et latrociniis opes quærebant, Wiik-kungar et Naak-kungar, i. e. reges maritimi dicebantur. Verelius, Hist. Suio-Gott. p. 6.

[2] Snorre, p. 43.

Digitized by Google

their fortunes. They attacked the king of Upsal, whom Haki defeated and succeeded.[3] Some years afterwards, the sons of Yngvi, who had become sea-kings, and lived wholly in their war-ships, roamed the ocean in search of adventures. They encountered the king of Haley-ia, and hanged him. They also assaulted Haki, and overpowered him.[4] Solvi was a sea-king, and infested the eastern regions of the Baltic with his depredations. He suddenly landed in Sweden in the night, surrounded the house where the king of Upsal was sleeping, and applying firebrands, reduced all who were in it to ashes.[5] Such was the generous warfare of these royal pirates.

It is declared to have been a law or custom in the North, that one of the male children should be selected to remain at home, to inherit the government. The rest were exiled to the ocean, to wield their sceptres amid the turbulent[6] waters. The consent of the northern societies entitled all men of royal descent, who assumed piracy as a profession, to enjoy the name of kings, though they possessed no territory.[7] Hence the sea-kings were the kinsmen of the land-sovereigns. While the eldest son ascended the paternal throne, the rest of the family hastened, like petty Neptunes, to esta-

[3] Snorre, Yngling, c. 25. p. 30, 31.

[4] Snorre, p. 31, 32. The practice of hanging the chief they overpowered, seems to have furnished their scalds with some gloomy wit. One of them calls the tree from which the king was suspended, *the horse* of Sigar. Ibid. 31.

[5] Snorre, p. 43.

[6] Mæssenius Scond. i. p. 4.; and see Wallingford, 533.

[7] Olaf. Trygg. Saga ap. Bartholin. Antiq. Dan. 446. Snorre has given a particular instance of this. Saga af Olafi, Hinom. Helga, c. 4. Wormius recognises the same custom. Mon. Dan. 269.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

blish their kingdoms in the waves[8]; and, if any of the fylki-kongr, or thiod-kongr, were expelled their inheritance by others, they also sought a continuance of their dignity upon the ocean.[9] When the younger branches of a reigning dynasty were about to become sea-kings, the ships and their requisite equipments were furnished as a patrimonial right, and perhaps as a political convenience.

When we recollect the numerous potentates of Scandinavia, and their general fecundity, we may expect that the ocean swarmed with sea-kings. Such was their number, that one Danish sovereign is mentioned by Saxo to have destroyed seventy of the honourable but direful race.[10] Their rank and successes always secured to them abundant crews, and the mischief they perpetrated must have been immense.[11] These sea-kings were also called Herkongr.

Northern piracy.

The sea-kings had the name of honour, but they were only a portion of those pirates, or vikingr,

[8] See Verelius, Hist. Suio-G. p. 6. Pontanus, Hist. Dan. p. 87. Stephanius in Sax. p. 152. Thus a grandson of the famous Ragnar Lodbrog was a sea-king, while his brother succeeded to the crown of Sweden. Filii Biornis jarnsidæ fuere Eirikus et Refillus, hic erat Herkongr oc Sækongr. Hervarar Saga, 225.

[9] Thus Gudrum: ab eo regno pulsus piratico more vixit, 1 Lang. 480. Thus also Biorn, 2. 1. 10. 89.

[10] Saxo Gram. lib. vii. p. 142.

[11] Snorre has recorded the sufferings of Sweden in his Ynglinga Saga; and the famous inscription on the lapis Tirstedensis, given by Wormius, Monum. 267., and commented on by Bartholin, 438., records the memory of Frotho, a vikingr terrible to the Swedes, 443. The ancient Sveno Aggonis mentions the extensive depredations of Helghi, a rex maris, Hist. Dan. 1 Langb. 44. And the Nornagesti Historia in one instance exhibits a volume of such incidents. "Hi regulos permultos subjugaverant, pugnatores fortissimos interfecerant, urbesque incendio deleverant ac in Hispania et Gallia immensam stragem ediderant." Ap. Torfæus, Series Reg. Dan. 384.

Digitized by Google

who in the ninth century were covering the ocean. Not only the children of the kings, but every man of importance, equipped ships, and roamed the seas to acquire property by force.[12] At the age of twelve, the sons of the great were in action under military tutors.[13] Piracy was not only the most honourable occupation, and the best harvest of wealth, it was not only consecrated to public emulation by the illustrious who pursued it[14], but no one was esteemed noble, no one was respected, who did not return in the winter to his home with ships laden with booty.[15] The spoil consisted of every necessary of life, clothes, domestic utensils, cattle, which they killed and prepared on the shores they ravaged, slaves, and other property.[16] It is not surprising that, while this spirit prevailed, every country abounded in deserts.

So reputable was the pursuit, that parents were even anxious to compel their children into the dangerous and malevolent occupation. It is asserted in an Icelandic Saga, that parents would not suffer the wealth they had gained by it to be

[12] Snorre, Saga, Olafi Helga, c. 192. p. 315.

[13] Snorre furnishes us with a fact of this kind: "quo tempore primum navem bellicam adscendit Olafus Haraldi filius XII annos natus erat." His mother appointed Ranius, who had been his foster-father, and had been often in warlike expeditions, the commander of the forces, atque Olafi curatorem. Saga, af Olafi Helga, c. 2. p. 3.

[14] The northern writers attest the *glory* which accompanied piracy. See Bartholin, 437. Verelius in Hervarar Saga, 47. Wormius, Mon. Dan. 269. Bartholin quotes the Vatzdæla, which says, Mos erat magnorum virorum regum vel comitum, æqualium nostrorum, ut piraticæ incumberent, opes ac gloriam sibi acquirentes, p. 438.

[15] Stephanius in Sax. p. 69.

[16] Thus Eystein, king of Upsal, pirated in Vaurnia, prædas ibi agit vestes, aliasque res pretiosas nec non colonorum utensilia rapiens, pecoraque in litore mactans, quo facto domum reversi sunt. Snorre, Yngling. Saga, c. 51. p. 58. So Adils plundered in Saxland, and got many captives. Ibid. c 32. p. 40.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

inherited by their offspring. It is mentioned to have been their practice to command their gold, silver, and other property to be buried with them, that their offspring might be driven by necessity to engage in the conflicts, and to participate the glory of maritime piracy.[17] Inherited property was despised. That affluence only was esteemed which danger had endeared.[18] It was therefore well said of the Northmen by one of their contemporaries, that they sought their food by their sails, and *inhabited* the seas.[19]

Even the regular land-kings addicted themselves to piracy.[20] It was the general amusement of their summer months: hence almost every king commemorated by Snorre is displayed as assaulting other provinces, or as suffering invasions in his own.[21] With strange infatuation, the population of the day welcomed the successful vikingr with the loudest acclamations; although, from the prevalence of the practice, domestic misery became the general lot. The victors of one day were the victims in the next; and he who was consigning without pity the women and children of other families to the grave or to famine, must have often found on his return but the ashes of his paternal habitation, and the corpses of those he loved.

The name by which the pirates were at first distinguished was Vikingr, which perhaps originally

[17] Vatzdæla ap. Barth. 438. [18] Ibid.

[19] Nigellus, who lived about 826, has left a poem on the baptism of Harald, in which he says,

"Ipse quidem populus late pernotas habetur,
Lintre dapes quærit, incolitatque mare." 1 Lang. 400.

[20] Verel, in Got. et Rol. p. 75.

[21] Yngl. c. 26. p. 31, 32. 40. Hence Snorre marks the autumn as the season of their return.

Digitized by Google

meant kings of the bays.[22] It was in bays that they ambushed, to dart upon the passing voyager. The recesses of the shores afforded them a station of safety as to the perils of the ocean, and of advantage as to their pursuit. Our bolder navigation, which selects in preference the middle of the ocean, was then unusual. The ancient merchants coasted wherever they could, and therefore naturally frequented bays in the progress of their voyage. In hopes of prey, the bays were also full of pirates, ever ready to dart upon their object.[23]

These fierce bands of robbers appear to have been kept in amity with each other by studied equality. It was a law, that the drinking-vessel should pass round the whole crew, as they sat, with undistinguished regularity.[24] Their method of fighting was the offspring of their fearless courage; they lashed their ships together, and from the prows rushed to mutual battle.[25]

The ferocity and useless cruelty of this race of beings almost transcend belief. The piracy of the vikingr, who were also called hernadi[26], was an exhibition of every species of barbarity. Besides the

[22] Wormius says, viig means a bay. Mon. Dan. 269.; and Bartholin favours the derivation, 446.

[23] Wormius, 269. And see the dissertation annexed to the Gunnlaugi Saga, 303.

[24] Snorre, Yngl. Saga, c. 41. p. 50. This custom is stated to have prevailed among the predatory Britons; "circa modium cerevisiæ ordinatim in modum circuli, illud circumdando discubuerunt." Vita Cadoci, MSS. Cotton Library, Vesp. A. 14.

[25] Snorre, Haralld's Saga, c. 11. p. 85.

[26] These words were at first promiscuously used. The Brandkrossa thetti, and the Svarfdalensium historia, cited by the editors of the Gunnlaugi Saga, p. 305., evince that they had some difference of meaning, but I do not think we understand the distinction. They who are curious may read the dissertation above quoted, p. 305.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

savage food of raw flesh and blood[27], which, however, the Greenlanders of our times are stated to have used, as also the Abyssinians[28], to tear the infant from the mother's breast, and to toss it on their lances from one to another[29], is stated in several books to have been the custom of many of these pirates, from which, though at a late period, their civilising chiefs at lest alienated them. It was a consistency of character in such men to despise tears and mourning so much, that they would never weep for their deceased relations.[30]

The Berserkir.

One branch of the vikingr is said to have cultivated paroxysms of brutal insanity, and they who experienced them were revered. These were the berserkir,[31] whom many authors describe. These

[27] See the Saga Gothrici et Rolfi, and also the Helgaquida of Sæmund, in Barthol. 456. One of the laws of Hialmar mentioned in the Orvar Oddz Sagu, was, ne crudam carnem comederent. Ibid.

[28] That the Greenlanders eat raw flesh, and drink the rein-deer's hot blood, see 2 Crantz, 28. And as to Abyssinia, see Bruce's life, p. cvii. 2d edition.

[29] This is stated by the English annalists, as Osborn, in his life of Elphegus, 2 Langb. p. 444. Matt. West. p. 388., and Henry of Huntingdon, lib. v. p. 347. After citing these, Bartholin records from the Landnamâ, the name of the man who abolished the horrid custom. The Landnamâ says, "Olverus Barnakall celebris incola Norvegiæ, validus fuit pirata, ille infantes ab unius hastæ mucrone in aliam projici, passus non est, quod piratus tunc familiare erat; ideoque Barnakall (infantum præsidium vel multos habens infantes) cognominatus est. Bartholin, p. 457.

[30] Adam Brem. states this fact of the Danes, p. 64.

[31] The berserkir were at first honoured. The Hervarar Saga applies the name to the sons of Arngrim, as a matter of reputation. Omnes magni berserkir fuere, p. 15. Snorre, in mentioning one who fought with Haralld Harfragre, calls him a berserkir mikill, a mighty berserkir Haralld's Saga, c. 19. p. 94. The scalld Hornklofi says, fremuere berserki bellum eis erat circa præcordia, p. 95. In another place, Snorre says, Haralld filled his ship with his attendants and berserkir; he says, the station of the berserkir was near the prow, ibid. p. 82.; he mentions them also, 69. It was in allusion to their ferocity, that the Harbarz lioth of Sæmund applies the name berserkir to signify giants. Edda Sæmundar, p. 107.

Digitized by Google

men, when a conflict impended, or a great undertaking was to be commenced, abandoned all rationality upon system; they studied to resemble wolves or maddening dogs; they bit their shields; they howled like tremendous beasts[32]; they threw off covering; they excited themselves to a strength which has been compared to that of bears, and then rushed to every crime and horror which the most frantic enthusiasm could perpetrate.[33] This fury was an artifice of battle, like the Indian war-whoop. Its object was to intimidate the enemy. It is attested that the unnatural excitation was, as might be expected, always followed by a complete debility.[34] It was originally practised by Odin.[35] They who used it, often joined in companies.[36] The furor Berserkicus, as mind and morals improved, was at length felt to be horrible. It changed from a distinction to a reproach[37], and was prohibited by penal laws.[38] The name at last became execrable.

When we consider the calamities, which the

[32] Hervar. Saga, p. 35. Saxo describes the berserkir fury minutely twice in his seventh book, p. 123, 124. Torfæus also, in Hrolfi kraka, p. 49., mentions them.

[33] Annotatio de Berserkir added to Kristni Saga, p. 142. See the Eyrbyggia Saga, ibid. p. 143. So the Egills Saga ap. Bartholin, p. 346.

[34] Hervarar Saga, p. 27. So the Egills Saga ap. Bartholin, p. 346.

[35] Snorre, Ynglinga, c. vi. p. 11. In the Havamal of Sæmund, Odin boasts of it as a magical trick. See the ode in Barthol. 347.

[36] So they appear in the Hervarar Saga.

[37] Thus the Vatzdæla. Thorus furore Berserkico nonnunquam corripiebatur, quod in tali viro probrum ducebatur, neque enim illud ipsi gloriosum erat. Barthol. 345. This man is made to say of himself, that it disgraced him, and he asks advice how to overcome it. Ibid. 346.

[38] The code of Icelandic law says, "furore berserkico si quis grassetur, relegatione puniatur." Ann. Kristni Saga, p. 142. So the Grettis Saga mentions of Eric, the earl of Norway, omnes Berserkos Norvegia exulare jussit. Ibid. 142.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

course of nature every where mixes with the happiness of man, we should, from theory, expect a general union of sentiment and wisdom to mitigate the evils which none can avoid. Experience however shows our species to have been engaged at all times in exasperating every natural affliction, by the addition of those which human agency can create. Mankind appear from history to have been always attacking each other, without the provocation of personal injury. If civilisation, science, and Christianity have not allayed the spirit of political ambition, nor subdued the love of warlike glory, we cannot be surprised that the untaught Northmen delighted in the depredations to which they were educated, from which they derived honour and fame, and by which they subsisted. Pity and benevolence are the children of our disciplined reason and augmented felicity. They are little known to our species in those ages, when general misery licenses and produces the most tyrannical selfishness. Hence the berserkir, the vikingr, or the sea-king, felt no remorse at the sight of human wretchedness. Familiar with misery from their infancy, taught to value peaceful society but as a rich harvest easier to be pillaged, knowing no glory but from the destruction of their fellow-creatures, all their habits, all their feelings, all their reasonings were ferocious; they sailed from country to country, to desolate its agriculture, and not merely to plunder, but to murder or enslave its inhabitants. Thus they landed in Gothia. The natives endeavoured to escape. The invaders pursued with the flame and sword.[39] So in Sweden, part

[39] Snorre, Ynglinga Saga, c. xxi. p. 24.

Digitized by Google

of the inhabitants they massacre, and part they make captive; but the fields were ravaged far and wide with fire.[40] The same miseries proclaimed their triumphs in Wendila. The flame and sword were unsparing assailants, and villages were converted into uninhabited deserts.[41] Thus at Paris they impaled 111 of their captives, crucified many others on houses and trees, and slew numbers in the villages and fields.[42] In war they seemed to have reckoned cruelty a circumstance of triumph; for the sea-king and the vikingr even hung the chiefs of their own order on their defeat.[43] And yet from the descendants of these men some of the noblest people in Europe have originated.

[40] Snorre, c. xxxi. p. 39. [41] Ibid.

[42] Du Chesne, Hist. Francorum Script. vol. ii. p. 655. The annals which he edited abound with such incidents.

[43] There are many instances of this in Snorre, p. 31. 33. 44., &c. also in the Herverar Saga, and others.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Comparison between the Histories of SAXO-GRAMMATICUS *and* SNORRE.—*The first Aggression of the Northmen on the* ANGLO-SAXONS.—*And the Rise, Actions, and Death of* RAGNAR LODBROG.

BOOK IV.

SUCH was the dismal state of society in the North. For a long time the miseries of this system were limited to the Baltic. After the colonisation of England had freed the Germanic and British ocean from Saxon piracy, Europe was blessed with almost three centuries of tranquillity. One Danish rover is stated to have wandered to the Maese[1] in the beginning of the sixth century; but the enterprise was unfortunate. Other Danes are mentioned as acting with the Saxons against the Francs. But after this century[2] we hear no more of Danes for above two hundred years.

BUT some of the historians of the North pretend that the Danes visited England and Europe in a much earlier period. Are these entitled to our belief?

SAXO-GRAMMATICUS, who died 1204[3], has left us a history which has delighted both taste and

[1] Gregory of Tours, who lived in 573, the oldest author extant who mentions the Danes, narrates this expedition. lib. iii. c. 3. p. 53. Corpus Franc. Hist. ed. Hanov. 1613.

[2] Venantius Fortunatus, who lived 565, mentions them as defeated by the kings of the Francs, lib. viii. c. 1. p. 822., and his lines to the Dux Lupus (lib. vi.) imply that the Danes and Saxons had invaded the country near Bourdeaux. This was probably some ebullition of the Anglo-Saxon expeditions against Britain.

[3] Stephan. Prolog. p. 22.

Digitized by Google

learning[4], by its elegance and vigour; and which, considering his age and country, is surprising for its power of composition. He conducts the Danes into Britain long before the Christian æra. According to his narration, Frotho the first, his ninth king of Denmark[5], Amleth, whose memory our Shakspeare has preserved[6], Fridlevus, the twenty-third king of Saxo[7], and Frotho, the next sovereign[8], fought, and with one exception obtained splendid victories in Britain, previous to the appearance of the Christian legislator. Twelve reigns afterwards, he states that Harald Hyldetand invaded England, and conquered the king of Northumbria.[9]

Some documents for his history Saxo may have derived from poems of the ancient scallds, from inscriptions on stones and rocks, from an inspection (yet how imperfect!) of the Icelandic authors, and

[4] Erasmus has honoured Saxo with a panegyric which every historian must covet; "qui suæ gentis historiam splendide magnificeque contexuit. Probo vividum et ardens ingenium, orationem nusquam remissam aut dormitantem; tam miram verboram copiam, sententias crebras, et figurarum admirabilem varietatem, ut satis admirari nequeam, unde illa ætate, homini Dano, tanta vis eloquendi suppetiverit." Dial. Ciceron. ap. Stephan. p. 33. And yet a more correct taste would suggest that his work is rather an oration than a history. Though some parts are happy, it is in general either tumid and exaggerated, or the specific fact is darkened or lost in declamatory generalities. It wants that exact taste for truth, as well as for patient comparison of antiquarian documents, which the history of such a period peculiarly required.

[5] Hist. Dan. lib. ii. p. 25.

[6] Hist. Dan. lib. iii. p. 56, 57. The speech of Amleth to the people, after destroying Fengo, is an exertion of eloquence very creditable to the genius of Saxo, p. 54, 55.

[7] Hist. Dan. 67.

[8] Hist. Dan. 95. Saxo places the birth of Christ immediately after. Ibid.

[9] Hist. Dan. 137.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

from the narrations of his friend.[10] We may even grant to him, that such men as he enumerates, such actions as he so eloquently describes, and such poems as he so diffusely translates[11], once appeared; but the chronology and succession into which he arranges them are unquestionably false. The boasted fountains of the history of the ancient Scandinavians[12], their memorial stones, and funeral runæ[13], the inscribed rings of their shields, the woven figures of their tapestry, their storied walls, their lettered seats and beds, their narrative wood, their recollected poetry, and their inherited traditions, may have given to history the names of many warriors, and have transmitted to posterity the fame of many battles; but no dates accompanied the memorials; even the geography of the incidents was very rarely noted. Hence, however numerous may have been the preserved memoranda, their arrangement and appropriation were left to the mercy of literary fancy or of national conceit.

SAXO unfortunately emulated the fame of Livy,

[10] Saxo mentions these authorities in his preface, p. 2.; and the curious will be pleased to read Stephanius's notes upon it.

[11] We have a striking proof how much Saxo has amplified the barren songs of the scallds, and therefore how little to be relied on for precision, in his poetical and elegant dialogue between Hialto and his friend Biarco, whom he roused to the defence of his endangered king. Forgetful of the emergency, Saxo prolongs it to six folio pages. Stephanius has cited part of the concise and energetic original, p. 82. which discovers the historian's exuberance.

[12] Torfæus mentions these in the prolegomena to his History of Norway, and in his Series Regum Dan. 50—53. They are also remarked by Bartholin, lib. i. c. 9.

[13] Wormius has given us the inscriptions found in Denmark in his Monumenta Danica; and Peringskiold copies many out of Sweden in his Monumenta Ullerakarensia, 321—349., and in his Monumentum Sveo-Goth. 177—306. See also Verelius's Manuductio, and others.

Digitized by Google

instead of becoming the Pausanias of Scandinavia; and instead of patiently compiling and recording his materials in the humble style or form in which he found them, which would have been an invaluable present to us, has shaped them into a most confused, unwarranted, and fabulous chronology. The whole of his first eight books, all his history anteceding Ragnar Lodbrog, can as little claim the attention of the historian, as the British history of Jeffry, or the Swedish history of Johannes Magnus. It is indeed superfluous, if we recollect the Roman history, to argue against a work which pretends to give to Denmark a throned existence, a regular government, and a tissue of orderly and splendid history for twenty-four royal accessions before the birth of Christ. Saxo, on whose history many others were formerly built, refers to the Icelandic writers[14]; but this only increases our depreciation of his narratives, for they are at irreconcileable variance with all his history before the ninth century.[15]

The Icelandic writers, Torfæus, their able champion, divides into four kinds: the allegorical, the fabulous, the mixed, and the authentic.[16]

[14] Though he applauds them in his preface, and even says, "quorum thesauros historicarum rerum pignoribus refertos curiosius consulens, haud parvam præsentis operis partem ex eorum relationis imitatione contexui; nec arbitros habere contempsi, quos tanta vetustatis peritia callere cognovi;" notwithstanding this, it may be fairly doubted if he knew much of them.

[15] Torfæus says justly of Saxo, that he has placed some kings before Christ, who flourished long after him; that he has made other kings of Denmark, who belonged to other regions, and has raised some to the supreme throne of Denmark, who were but tributary reguli. Series Regum Dan. p. 219.

[16] See his discriminated catalogue of the Icelandic writings in his Series Regum Dan. p. 3—12.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

Of the authentic, the only one extant who attempts a history much earlier[17] than the times of Haralld Harfragre, is Snorre, the son of Sturla, who has given us as faithful a compilation of northern history as his means and age permitted. Beginning with Odin, the common ancestor of the Scandinavian, Danish, and Saxon nations, as Hercules was of the Grecian royal dynasties, he first gives the history of the Ynglingi kings at Upsal, and the life of Halfdan Svarte, the father of Harald. He then continues the history of Norway to his own time.

Snorre incidentally mentions the Danish kings of Lethra[18], and he clashes irreconcileably with Saxo, always in the chronology and successions, and sometimes in the incidents.[19] As far as the internal characters of authenticity can decide the competition between him and Saxo, he has every superiority, and no rational antiquary will now dispute it. His narratives, though sprinkled with a few fables[20], are very short, consistent, and unadorned; they display the genuine costume of the time: the quotations from the scallds are given literally, no chronology is marked, and his arrangement does not carry up his actors to any extra-

[17] There are Icelandic writers extant more ancient than Snorre, as Ara Frode, born 1068; his contemporary, Semund, the author of the ancient Edda; Eiric, who about 1161 wrote on the sons of Harald Gillius; Charles, an abbot, in 1169, whose history of King Swerrer remains: and Oddus, author of the Saga of Olave Tryggvason; but these are on later subjects. Torfæus, Prolegomena Hist. Norv.

[18] Pp. 24. 34. 37. 39. 41. 43. 54. 69, 70. 77.

[19] To give only one instance; Saxo places Helghi and his son Rolf Krake eleven reigns before Christ. Snorre says, Rolf fell in the reign of Eystein, p. 43., the third king before Ingialld, who lived in the seventh century of the Christian era.

[20] As in pp. 9, 10. 24. and 34.

Digitized by Google

vagant antiquity.[21] It is in his work, if in any of the northern ancient documents, we shall find some true information of the earliest attacks of the Northmen on Britain.

The first king whom Snorre mentions to have had dominion in England, is Ivar Vidfadme, a king of Scania, who conquered Upsal. His words are, "Ivar Vidfadme subjected to him all Sweden, all Denmark, great part of Saxony, all Austurrikia, and the fifth part of England."[22] But no English chronicler notices such a person or such an event. Our ancient annalists expressly mark the year 787 as the date of the first aggressions of the Northmen on England[23], which is subsequent to the reign of

[21] He gives thirty-two reigns between Odin and Haralld Harfragre. Almost all the kings perished violently; therefore the average of their reigns cannot exceed twenty years. This computation would place Odin about 220 years after Christ. Nothing can show more strongly what little support the songs of the scallds can give to the remote periods of northern antiquity, than the fact that the scalld Thiodolfr, on whom Snorre bases his history before Haralld Harfragre, and whom he therefore quotes twenty-six times, lived in the days of Harald, or about the year 900. We find him, p. 115., singing in the last days of Harald, who died 936. Excepting Brage Gamle, who is once quoted on Odin, p. 9., and Eywindr, who lived after Thiodolfr, and who is adduced twice, p. 13. 31., no other scalld is referred to. The poems of the scallds may be good authority for incidents near their own times, but can be only deemed mere popular traditions as to the earlier history of a barbarous people. Snorre's other authorities are genealogies and individual narratives. See his preface. But the Icelandic genealogies are often contradictory. Their most veracious writers are rather the faithful recorders of traditions, usually true in substance, but as usually inaccurate, than the selecting or critical compilers of authentic history.

[22] Snorre Yngl. Saga, c. xlv. p. 54. This part of England the Herverar Saga marks to be Northumbria; and gives the same dominion to his grandson Haralld Hyldetand, c. xix. p. 223.

[23] Sax. Chron. 64.; Fl. Wig. 280.; Ethelw. 839.; Malmsb. 16.; Hunt. 343.; Matt. West. 282., and several others. The annals of Ulster do not mention their attacks on Ireland earlier; but from this period incessantly.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

Ivar. If, therefore, he conquered or plundered any where in Britain, it must have been in Scotland, of whose early history we have no correct information[24], and whose coasts were most likely to be the first attacked.

But from the state and habits of the natives of Scandinavia and the Baltic, which have been described, we might have expected the result to have been, that this mutual destruction and desolation would in time have consumed themselves and unpeopled the north. Europe had then no reason to apprehend any mischief from such men, because Charlemagne had just raised a formidable Frankish empire; Egbert had consolidated the Anglo-Saxon power, and it was the interest of the new monarchies that were absorbing their own little sovereignties to extinguish such a restless race. But such are the unexpected directions which the course of human agency frequently takes, that at this very period those dreadful hurricanes of war and desolation began to arise in the north, which afflicted all the maritime regions of Europe with a succession of calamities for above a century. As it exhibits a curious picture of human nature in its more savage energies, and is immediately connected with the romantic, and yet authentic, history of one man, whose transactions

[24] The northern literati place Ivar at the end of the sixth century. If this were just chronology, he might have been one of the adventurers that came among the Angles into Northumbria or Mercia.

As the Angles and Jutes came from the Danish provinces of Sleswick and Jutland, their ancient memorials might have, not unfairly, pretended to conquests in Britain. But from a critical comparison of some of the most authentic of the ancient Icelandic authorities, I am satisfied that Ivar Vidfadme has been placed above a century too early.

Digitized by Google

have not before been introduced into our annals, Ragnar Lodbrog, it is important to take an enlarged but calm review of the causes that produced this direction, and gave such an effect to his peculiar position and singular propensities.

In every country whose inhabitants have passed from their nomadic or wandering condition into a settled state, the culivated lands become gradually the property of a portion only of the community. Their first occupiers or partitioners transmit them to their descendants; while the rest of society, as it multiplies, must, until commerce and the arts open new sources of employment and acquisitions, either serve the proprietary body as vassals and retainers, more or less dignified by office, title, or birth; or as labourers more or less servile; or they must float loosely in life without an adequate provision for their desires or necessities. This unprovided class soon arises as population increases, and augments with its increase. When the sub-divisions of trade and manufactures occur, large portions of the unprovided are absorbed by them; but still many remain, in every age and country, from the rudest to the most civilised, who form a body of men disposed to be restless, migratory, enterprising, and ready for every new adventure, or impression, which the flowing accidents of time, or the rise of bold and active original characters can present to them. This class pursues the progress of society in all its stages, feeds or occasions all its wars, seditions, colonies, and migrations, and has repeatedly shaken the happiness of the more civilised nations.

It seems not to be the want of actual food on the earth which creates this unprovided body; for

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

there is not sufficient evidence that nature has, in any period, produced less food than the existing population needed. The more population tends to press upon the quantity of subsistence in any country, the more it also tends to increase it. As the pressure begins, the activity and ingenuity of mankind are roused to provide for it. The powers of nature have hitherto answered to their call, and rewarded their exertions with the requisite supply. Hence increased production has always accompanied increased population, and still attends it: nor have we yet approached, nor probably shall we ever reach the period when the fertility of the earth and the ingenuity of man shall fail to be equal to the subsistence that is needed. New means have always hitherto unfolded to meet new exigencies. In the case of the Northmen, it is remarkable, that although every act of plunder was also an act of ravage, and more of the necessaries and conveniences of life were destroyed by their depredations than were either carried off or consumed; yet the numbers of both the plunderers and plundered increased till they formed well-peopled and prosperous communities.

This unprovided class arises from the impossibility of having any system of property without it. These systems have increased population, civilisation, general prosperity, and individual comfort: but they are always multiplying the number of those, who either form no part of the proprietary body, or whose individual portions are inferior to the demands of their habits, their passions, or their necessities. To equalise all property, would not destroy the evil, unless wisdom and virtue could be made equally common. Society at this moment

Digitized by Google

presents us, in every part of Europe, with a large unprovided population. A similar class existed, though under different habits, in the ninth century, all round the Baltic and North Sea; and it was from this body of men that the sea-kings and vikingr principally emerged.

This unprovided population consisted and consists, not of the poor only, but also of many from the wealthier classes of every state. In every age, some portions of the families of all the rich and great have been as unable to continue the state and enjoyment of their relations, and of their own earlier days, as the meaner conditions of life to attain them. The one become the leaders of the other, and both alike desire adventures and employments, by which they can attain the property, the luxuries, or the distinctions which they covet.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Anglo-Saxons of this class poured themselves on Britain, and the numerous petty sovereignties in Norway, Sweden, and the Danish isles, seem to have arisen from the same source. Adventurers, seeking their fortune, appear to have landed from time to time on various parts of the uninhabited regions and islands of Scandinavia, with little bands of inferior companies; and as their posterity multiplied, levelled the forests, drained the marshes, and cultivated the earth: then humble kingdoms, jarlls, and nobility appeared. But the same result, in time, pursued them here which had driven them hither. All the lands they could subject to human culture became appropriated; claims of individual property became fastened on the parts which were left untilled; and unprovided population increased in

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

each, who had to look elsewhere for the rank and comforts which the rest inherited.

At the close of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century, the unprovided population of the north was in full activity among their little kingdoms and jarlldoms in every part of the Baltic. The acquisition of property by violence was their object, the sea their road to it, the sword their instrument, and all the settled habitations which they could reach, master, or surprise, were the theatres of their enterprise. The invention of the term sea-king satisfied the ambition of their highest-born chieftains; and the spoil obtained by their depredations, and the energies necessary to be exerted to make the expeditions successful, gratified their associates.

But the vicinity of their domestic homes for a long time circumscribed the sphere of their exertions. There is not sufficient evidence that they had advanced beyond the Baltic, till that individual to whom we have already alluded, Ragnar Lodbrog, had been expelled by Harald from his insular kingdom; and becoming himself a sea-king, led his fleet of depredators successively to Friesland, Flanders, the British islands, and to France.

We do not know enough of the incidents of his youth to delineate the gradual formation of Ragnar's peculiar character: but we can trace some of the circumstances that favoured the new habit which he either began or the most powerfully promoted. His father, Sigurd, was a Norwegian, who had married the Danish princess, daughter of the king of the chief Danish island.[25] His spirit of

[25] So Snorre states.

Digitized by Google

adventure had therefore an encouraging example in his father's elevation. But that father had been opposed by the king of Jutland in a battle in which nearly eleven thousand men and both the chieftains perished.[27] On this fatal result the contending partisans compromised their quarrel by raising the sons of their several leaders to their fathers' thrones. Ragnar was made king of the isles, and Harald of the Danish territory in Jutland. But this arrangement was too pacific to last long in such a turbulent age; and the friends of Harald were found to be numerous enough to enable him to expel Ragnar from his sea-girt kingdom. This warrior, in all the pride and activity of his youth, was driven with all his followers to seek that provision and distinction on the ocean, and by their swords, which they were not allowed to retain on their domestic territory.

If Ragnar had been a common-minded man he would have been but a common plunderer, and have soon fallen in the usual violent deaths of battle or punishment which most pirates at last undergo. But Denmark was, from its contiguity to the Frankish kingdom and to the improving continental Saxons, the most civilised country of the barbaric north. Its monarchy was also beginning to arise. Its small kingdoms having been subdued or absorbed into two, and these, from their increasing power and dignity, being more cultivated than formerly, Ragnar Lodbrog, before he became a sea-king, had obtained the greatest advantages of education which the Baltic at that time afforded. Son of an enterprising Norwegian and of a Danish

[27] Ad Brem. Alb. Stad. and Aimonius.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

princess, he thus united in himself all the improvements which Norway and Denmark could then confer. His great natural talents thus assisted, he entered upon his new profession with a distinction which led to great exploits. The actual enjoyment of a previous kingdom fixed large objects of ambition in his mind; gave him at his outset an impressive and dignified character, and connected him with more numerous and powerful friends and followers than any ordinary vikingr could influence or command. The insular nature of the territory over which he had reigned favoured his enterprises, and he soon became formidable enough to compel his land-rival to implore the succours of the Frankish empire.

But this event became only another impulse to the new direction which Ragnar was insensibly giving to all the population about him. That the Franks should presume to interfere in behalf of his enemy, was an affront that fixed in his heart an indignant resolution to avenge himself on them. This vindictive feeling led him out of the Baltic to France itself; and though he could not dethrone his competitor at home, he had followers enough to penetrate to the walls of Paris, and to afflict France, in its then quarrelling state, with the most calamitous depredations. The personal fame which he gained by these distant expeditions was an impressive appeal to the vanity and emulation of all the northern youth; and his booty tempted the most selfish to join his fleets or to imitate his adventures.

About the same period a king of Norway, Harald Harfagre, unintentionally contributed to give the unprovided population and ambitious youth of that country the same external direction and a

Digitized by Google

new impulse to pursue it. He also began the system of subduing in Norway all its petty sovereignties, and of extirpating piracy within his dominions. Nothing then remained in Norway for those who had not lands or property, but to seek them elsewhere. Bands of adventurers now arose from hence, who were resolved to obtain subsistence, plunder, fame, or settlement in other countries by their swords. And one of these, under the command of Hrolfr or Rollo, after harassing France with desolation, extorted from its sovereign the province of Normandy.

From the operation of these circumstances as they successively occurred, distant expeditions, for temporary plunder, vindictive retaliations, or military colonisation, became, from the end of the eighth century, the regular habits of the active population of the north. We have mentioned that in 787 the fierce visitors first appeared in England. By the year 800, they had begun to molest the Franks[28]; and before the death of Charlemagne, which occurred in 814, they had even reached the Mediterranean.

He was at dinner in the city of Narbonne when their ships came in sight. By the construction of the vessels and the agility of their mariners, he knew they were not merchants. He rose from the table, and went to the eastern window of the mansion to contemplate them. His tears fell as he gazed: "I fear not," he exclaimed, "that they can injure me; but I weep that they should dare,

[28] So the ancient Saxon Latin versifier states. Hist. Franc. Du Chesne, ii. p. 164.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

in my life-time, to approach my coasts. I foresee the misery they will bring on my descendants."[29]

To protect his empire from their assaults, he caused ships to be built against them on the rivers which, from Gaul and Germany, disembogue their waters into the Northern Ocean.[30] In every harbour, and at the mouth of every stream which it was possible for them to ascend, he established stations and garrisons to preserve the endangered country. Kept off by his active genius, they seldom molested the peace of his dominions.

His son Louis attempted the policy of converting the north; he invited all such vikingr as approached his coast to accept of the sacred baptism. As he was careful that the initiated should leave his court laden with presents, it is not surprising that they came in haste to be baptised. A surly exclamation of a converted chieftain revealed the sincerity of the new Christians and the utility of the project. At one paschal solemnity, the pretended penitents were so numerous, that white dresses could not be procured for all the pagans; some linen of the clergy was cut up and sewed together, and a garment thus made was given to a northern leader. The son of Odin frowned with disdain. "This is the *twentieth* time that I have come to be washed, and I have hitherto always received the best white dresses; this vile apparel is fit only for a herdsman; if I can have no better garment, I disclaim your Christianity."[31]

[29] The monk of St. Gall has transmitted to us this incident in his work, de Reb. Car. Magn. ii. p. 130.

[30] Eginhard, p. 8. Meyer, in his Annals of Flanders, mentions that the emperor stayed some time at Ghent, on account of the ships which he had ordered to be built there against the Northmen.

[31] Sax. Gall. p. 134.

Digitized by Google

THE civil wars of the children of Louis favoured the subsequent aggressions of the vikingr.[32]. The Frankish princes sent an embassy, in 847, to the king of the Northmen, to desire peace, and to announce their union.[33]. But such an embassy was as useless as it would have been to have petitioned any single wind not to blow. Every habitable district was a nursery of pirates; and to obtain the forbearance of one leader, was to ensure a rich harvest for the rest. This effect seems to have been experienced; for in this same year we read of their attacks on Brittany, Aquitain, and Bourdeaux, as well as on Dorestadt and the Batavian island. In Aquitain they ravaged successfully; "because," says Ademar, "the chiefs were destroying each other in their warfare, and because the people had no fleet to protect their coasts." The list of districts which they afflicted is very copious.[34] They also attacked Spain near Cadiz, fought three battles with the Moors, and, when Abderrahman provided a fleet to oppose them, they left the country, full of plunder.[35]

OF all the sea-kings and vikingr who roamed the ocean in the ninth century, the man whose life and death had the most disastrous effects on England was Ragnar Lodbrog, whose quida, or death-song, has been long venerated for its antiquity, and celebrated for its genius.[36] The learned of the North

[32] See Chron. Fontanell. and the Ann. Bertinin. and Frag. Hist. Brit. in Bouquet's Recueil, v. 7.

[33] Miroi ap. Deplom. vol. i. p. 23.

[34] See 1 Langb. 534.

[35] Mariana.

[36] The most complete edition for the use of the English reader of the Lodbrokar Quida is that edited by Johnstone in 1782. But as his English translation is not a literal one, a more exact version is

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

have usually quoted it as his own composition[37], although one would ascribe it to his wife, who was also a famous scalld or poetess.[38] It is one of the most ancient pieces of Northern literature; expresses exactly the manners of those times; and, compared with the other histories and traditions that have been preserved concerning him, will be found to contain the most simple, probable, and consistent incidents. As his death, the approach of which it ends with intimating, was the cause of that disastrous invasion which shook Alfred from his throne, it merits the consideration of the English reader, in those parts which concern the British Islands.

RAGNAR is not mentioned by name in the Saxon annalists; because, while they commemorate the invasions of the Northmen during his life, they seldom notice the commander. But the Frankish chronicles expressly mention him in that aggression in 845, in which he even penetrated as far up the Seine as Paris. He began by ravaging the isles of the sea; thence proceeded to Rouen, and finding no effective resistance, he left his ships, and his warriors spread over the country. Invited onward by the general consternation, they ad-

attempted of the passages quoted in the text. Mr. C. C. Rafn has, in 1826, published an elegant edition of it at Copenhagen, with a Danish and a French translation, with many notes and remarks; but has secluded them from general use out of Denmark, by expressing them in its vernacular language. He calls it "Krakas Mal:" or, the Song of Kraka. Some MS. so entitle it. He suggests that although Ragnar and his companions may have sung the twenty-three first stanzas, Kraka, his queen and widow may have added the six last. Skule Thorlacius wishes to take the composition of it from both Ragnar and Kraka; and to give it to Bragi the son of Boddi. Antiq. Boreal. p. 70.

[37] As Wormius, Bartholin, Stephanius, and others. It was not uncommon in the north for their kings to celebrate their own actions.

[38] So Torfæus intimates.

Digitized by Google

vanced to Paris on Easter-Eve. The next day they entered the city, and found it deserted by its inhabitants. They destroyed the monastery of St. Germains, when a present from the king of seven thousand pounds induced them to desist from their ravages.[39] The attacks of his son Biorn, in 843, are also recorded.[40] His name of Lothbroc occurs in our chroniclers at his death; but they were ignorant of his true history, which is stated in none of our old documents, except in the ancient Anglo-Norman poem of Denis Pyramis.[41] His death, as justly stated in the Icelandic remains, happened in Northumbria. In opposition to his

[39] Chron. Fontanel.; 7 Bouq. p. 41.; Chron. Vezel. p. 271.; Mirac. Racher. p. 361.; and Aimonius, p. 350. Pet. Olaus, 1 Langb. 109. See also Ann. Bertin. and Amm. Mirac, S. Germ.

[40] Frag. Hist. Brit. 7 Bouq. p. 46. The chronicles which mention Biorn's expeditions are very numerous. See Pontop. Gest. Dan.

[41] It is so extraordinary to find this in an Anglo-Norman rhimer's work, that I quote the passage in the original, as it has never been observed or printed before. He is here called Lothbroc, and his three sons, Yngar, Hulbe, and Berin, for Inguar, Ubba, and Beorn.

Cil Lothebroc e ses treis fiz
Furent de tute gent haiz;
Kar uthlages furent en mer;
Unques ne fuierent de rober.
Tuz jurs vesquirent de rapine;
Tere ne cuntree veisine
N'est pres d'els ou il a larun,
N'ensentfeit envasiun.
De ceo furent si enrichez,
Amuntez et amanantez.
Qu'il aveient grant annee
De gent; e mult grant assemble;
Qu'il aveient en lur companye
Kant erronent oth lur navye.
Destrut en aveient meint pais;
Meint pœple destrut et occis:
Nule contree lez la mer
Ne se put d'els ja garder.

Den. Pyr. MSS. Domit. xi. p. 12.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

wife Aslauga's counsel he built two ships of a size which the North had never beheld before; he filled them with soldiers, and sailed along the Scottish coast to England, which he selected to be the theatre of his exertions.[42] The triumphs of these royal pirates had been obtained by the celerity of their retreats, as well as the vigour of their attacks. It was not their competency to overcome the force which any country could embody against them, that made them so successful; but their ability in their light ships of attacking before it could be collected, or of eluding it when too formidable. These spacious ships tended to deprive Ragnar of this advantage and thereby produced his fate.

Too large for the ignorant navigation of that period, these vessels were soon wrecked on the English shore. Thrown on the coast of enemies, without means of return, Ragnar had no choice but to dare his fortune, which his pride also counselled. He moved forward as soon as he got to the shore, to plunder and ravage, either disdaining to recollect that his small band would soon be confronted by superior strength, or hoping to deter any hostility by the boldness of his measures.

Ella, at that time, was king of Deira, and with the force of his kingdom marched up to the fearless vikingr; a fierce, though unequal conflict ensued. Ragnar, clothed in the garments which he had received from his beloved Aslauga, at their parting, four times pierced the ranks of Ella, but his friends fell one by one around him, and he at last was taken prisoner alive.

Ella obeyed the impulse of barbarian resent-

[42] 2 Langb. 227. Torfæus, Hist. Norv.

Digitized by Google

ment, and doomed his illustrious prisoner to perish with lingering pain in a dungeon, stung by venomous snakes.[43]

THE Quida celebrates the depredations of Ragnar on various countries, from the Baltic to England, and on Flanders. It presents to us a view of one of the dreadful states of society in which our species have lived. Every incident is triumphantly described with the imagery of death, and the revolting circumstances attending human slaughter are recollected with exultation. Such were the people for whom the author composed this death-song, that, not content with equalling the pleasures of war to social festivity, and with remembering, without remorse, its destruction of youthful happiness[44]; he even extols it as rivalling one of the sweetest hours of life; "Was it not like that hour when my bright bride I seated by me on the couch?"[45] What must have been the characters and the transactions of that nation, in which the conversation

[43] 2 Langb. 277. Saxo has been thought to place Ella in Ireland, but whoever reads the pages 176, 177, carefully, will see that he speaks of England. The Icelandic authors unanimously station him in Northumbria. This fact ascertains the time of Ragnar's death; for Ella usurped the Northumbrian crown in 862, and perished 867; therefore between these years Ragnar must have expired. The English chroniclers acknowledge that Lodbrog was killed in England; but so imperfectly was the Northumbrian history known to them, that for the true history of Ragnar's fate, they substitute two contradictory tales. See Matt. West. 314—316., and Bromton, 802.

[44] "Delightful was the work at Sky, as when the damsels bring the wine." St. 18. "Pleasant was it at Ila's Straits, as when the wine-bearing Nioruns hand the warm streams."

"In the morning I saw struck down
The fair-hair'd wooer of the maiden,
And him whose converse was so sweet to the widow."
St. 19.

[45] Stanza 13., and see Stanza 24.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

and sympathy of love, were felt to be *but* as charming as a battle!

We may concede to the historical traditions of the North, and to the chroniclers of other nations, that Ragnar Lodbrog depredated with success on various parts of Europe, on the British islands, on Sweden, Norway, and the coasts round the Baltic.[46] We may admit that he was one of those men whose lives become models to their contemporaries; and that his activity and genius were fitted to give celebrity to bloodshed, and dignity to plunder. "Fifty and one times," as his Quida asserts, "his messenger, the spear, may have announced the distant enterprise." But it would be an extravagant aggrandisement of his fame, to attribute to him all the horrors which Northern piracy poured upon Europe in the first part of the ninth century. It is indeed a coincidence with his life, that till he lived, few and rare were the aggressions of the sea-king and the vikingr, beyond the northern Hellespont.[47] But though he gave to the storm of depredation a new direction; yet when he had once burst beyond the precincts of the Baltic; when he had once crossed new oceans, and thrown the beam of glory round his course, we may believe that adventurers swarmed from every coast, eager to track his way. It is certain that after his life, new heroes appeared

[46] We may refer to Saxo, l. ix. p. 169. 177., with Stephanius's notes; to the Icelandic fragment, in 2 Laugb. 270. 280.; to the Ragnar Saga; and to Torfæus, in his Series Dan. and his Hist. Norveg. for the northern account of the particular transactions of Ragnar. Johannes Magnus, and Loccenius, also mention his history.

[47] The Baltic is called by some the Hellespont; as by Hevelius, in the Dedic. to his Selenographia. The use of this word has, I think, sometimes misled Northern authors to carry some of their heroes towards the Euxine, the Hellespont of Homer.

Digitized by Google

every year, and the seas were burthened with ever-succeeding fleets of such greedy and ruthless savages.

It was the lot of Ragnar to have a numerous posterity[48], and all his passions were infused into his children, whom he educated to be sea-kings like himself. But as our history is concerned with his English exploits only, we will state them from his Quida, in its own language, and in the succession in which they are there placed.

The Quida begins with Ragnar's attempt on Gothland, by which he obtained his wife Thora. This expedition, and others in Eyra-sound, or the Baltic; at the mouth of the Dwina; at Helsingia, in the bay of Finland; and against Herrauthr, his wife's father; at Scarpey, in Norway; at Uller Akri, near Upsal; at the Indoro Isles, in the bay of Drontheim; and on the island of Bornholm, occupy the first nine stanzas. After these exploits the sea-king comes nearer to the British shores, and begins his southern ravages with an attack on Flanders. This is followed by a bold invasion of England, in which he boasts of the death of the Anglo-Saxon Walthiofr.

> We hewed with our swords ——
> Hundreds, I declare lay
> Round the horses of the Island-rocks,
> At the English promontory.
> We sailed to the battle
> Six days before the hosts fell.
> We chanted the mass of the spears
> With the uprising sun.

[48] According to Saxo, he had ten sons by his three wives, p. 169, 170. 172. The Ragnar Saga, ap. Torfæus, 346, 347., gives their mothers differently from Saxo.

Digitized by Google

Destiny was with our swords:
Walthiofr fell in the tumult.[49]

Conflicts at Perth, and on the Orkneys, are then exultingly sung: another occurs afterwards in England.

Hard came the storm on the shield
Till they fell prone to the earth
On Northumbria's land.
On that morning was there
Any need for men to stimulate
The sport of Hillda, where the sharp
Lightnings bit the helmed skull?
Was it not as when the young widow
On my seat of pre-eminence I saluted.[50]

Exploits at the Hebrides; in Ireland; at another coast, where "the thorn of the sheath glided to the heart of Agnar," his son; at the Isle of Sky; and in the bay of Ila, on the Scottish coast, are triumphantly narrated. Another stanza follows, which seems to make Lindisfarne the locality of the battle:

We had the music of swords in the morning
For our sports at Lindis-eyri
With three kingly heroes.
Many fell into the jaws of the wolf;
The hawk plucked the flesh with the wild beasts;
Few ought therefore to rejoice
That they came safe from the battle.
Ira's blood into the sea
Profusely fell; into the clear wave.[51]

He next records his expedition on the British isle of Anglesey:

[49] Lod. Quid. St. 11. John. p. 14.
[50] St. 15. p. 18.
[51] St. 20. p. 24.

Digitized by Google

The swords bit the shields;
Red with gold resounded
The steel on the clothes of Hillda.
They shall see on Aungol's Eyri,
In the ages hereafter,
How we to the appointed play
Of heroes advanced.
Red were on the distant cape
The flying dragons of the river that gave wounds.[52]

After two stanzas of eulogy on battles, he begins to commemorate his disastrous change of fortunes, and avows that it was unexpected to him:

It seems to me, from experience,
That we follow the decrees of the fates.
Few escape the statutes of the natal goddesses.
Never did I believe that from Ella
The end of my life would come,
When I strewed the bloody slaughter,
And urged my planks on the lakes.
Largely we feasted the beasts of prey
Along the bays of Scotland.[53]

But he consoles himself with his belief in his pagan mythology:

It delights me continually
That the seats of Baldor's father
I know are strewed for guests.
We shall drink ale immediately
From the large hollowed sculls.
Youths grieve not at death
In the mansions of dread Fiolner.
I come not with the words of fear
Into the hall of Vithris.[54]

He animates his spirit as the adders sting him, with the remembrance of his children, as if he anticipated their fierce revenge for his sufferings:

[52] St. 21. p. 24.
[53] St. 24. p. 28.
[54] St. 25. p. 28.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

Here would for me
All the sons of Aslauga,[55]
The bright brands of Hillda awake
If they knew but the danger
Of our encounter.
What a number of snakes
Full of venom strike me?
I gained a true mother for my children,
That they might have brave hearts.[56]

His strength decreases as he sings: he feels advancing death, yet seems to catch a gleam of pleasure from the hopes of the vengeance which his children will inflict:

It flows to my inheritance;
Grim dangers surround me from the adder;
Vipers dwell in the palace of my heart —
We hope that soon the staff
Of Vithris will stand in Ella's breast.
My sons must swell
That their father has been thus conquered.
Must not the valiant youths
Forsake their repose for us?[57]

The recollection of his own exploits gives a momentary impulse of new vigour, and the number announces the ferocious activity of his sea-king life:

[55] We have a specimen of the traditions of the Norwegians concerning this lady, in Torfæus. He says that in Spangareid, an isthmus in Norway, the greatest part of her history remains uncorrupted. The people of this region relate from the accounts of their ancestors, that a golden harp came on shore in a small bay near them, in which was found a little girl. She was brought up; afterwards kept sheep; became famed for her beauty; married a Danish king, and was called Otlauga. They show a hill, called Otlauga's hill. The bay is named Gull-Siken, or golden bay; and the stream near this is called Kraakabecker, or the rivulet of Kraaka. Torf. ser. Reg. p. 85. Kraka was one of this lady's prior names.

[56] St. 26. p. 80. [57] St. 27. p. 80.

Digitized by Google

Fifty and one times have I
Call'd the people to the appointed battles
By the warning-spear-messenger.
Little do I believe that of men
There will be any
King, more famous than ourself.
When young I grasped and reddened my spear.
The Æsir must invite us;
I will die without a groan.[58]

As the fatal instant presses on, he rouses himself to expire with those marks of exultation which it was the boast of this fierce race to exhibit:

We desire this end.
The Disir goddesses invite me home;
As if from the hall of him rejoicing in spoils,
From Odin, sent to me.
Glad shall I with the Asæ
Drink ale in my lofty seat.
The hours of my life glide away,
But laughing I will die.[59]

THE sovereign that arose with sufficient ability to meet and change the crisis which these new habits of the Scandinavian nations were bringing on Europe, was Alfred the Great, the son of Ethelwulph, and grandson of Egbert.

[58] St. 28. p. 82.

[59] St. 29. p. 82. Torfæus supposes two other Lodbrogs. I am not sure that he is not dividing the same person into three parts. But it is clear that the Ragnar Lodbrog, the subject of the Quida, is the person whom Ella of Northumbria destroyed between 862 and 867, and whose children, in revenge, executed that invasion which destroyed the octarchy of England, and dethroned Alfred for a time.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

The Reign of ETHELWULPH. — *Invasion of the Northmen.* — *Birth of* ALFRED *the Great.* — *His Travels.* — ETHELWULPH's *Deposition.*

BOOK IV.

836—856. Ethelwulph's education.

THE death of Egbert, in 836, checked for a while the ascendency of the West Saxon power, because his sceptre descended to an inferior hand in his son Ethelwulph. This prince, who from the failure of other issue became his successor, was then a monk. Educated in the earlier part of his life by Helmstan the bishop of Winchester, he had shared at first in his father's warlike toils. In 823, he had marched with Alstan into Kent after the defeat of Mercia, and was appointed by his father king of that country[1], but the passive timidity of his disposition alienated him from an ambitious life, and he returned to his preceptor, who recommended him to the care of Swithin, a prior of the monastery at Winchester. From Swithin the prince received not only instruction, but also the monastic habit, and by his first master was appointed a subdeacon.[2]

THE quiet seclusion which Ethelwulph's slow capacity and meek temper coveted, was not re-

[1] There is a charter of Egbert, dated 823, in which he says of Ethelwulph, "quem regem constituimus in Cantia." Thorpe, Reg. Roff. p. 22.

[2] Rudborne Hist. Mag. Winton. lib. iii. c. 1. p. 199., published in Wharton's Anglia Sacra, vol. i. — Malmsbury Pontiff. p. 242. Wallingf. 532. No good document authorises us to say that he was made a bishop.

Digitized by Google

fused to him by Egbert, because another son promised to perpetuate his lineage.[3] But life is a mysterious gift, which vanishes at the will of other agencies, whose operations we cannot trace, whose power we cannot limit. The destined heir of Egbert's dignity was in the tomb before his father, and this catastrophe invested Ethelwulph with an importance which his natural character could never have obtained. He became what Egbert had been, the only existing descendant of Cerdic, the revered ancestor of the West Saxon princes. This casualty made the accession of Ethelwulph an object of popular desire; but though sovereigns had often at will descended from the throne to the cloister, it was less easy to quit the cloister for the throne. The papal dispensation was first wanted to release Ethelwulph from his sacerdotal engagement; on its arrival he assumed the crown of Egbert.[4]

His indolent, mild, and weak mind[5] was not adequate to the exigencies of the time, but he enjoyed the great advantage which was capable of counteracting the ill effects of his inability, a wise and vigorous minister. Alstan, the bishop of Sherborne, had possessed the favour of Egbert, and on his death became the political and military

[3] The expressions of the chroniclers are in general mere negatives, implying that Egbert left no other heir; but the extract which Leland has translated, ex Chronico quodam Vilodunensi Anglicis rithmis scripto, explicitly says, Atwulphus rex Egberti fflius secundus. Collectanea, vol iii. p. 219.

[4] Wallingford, 532. The name of this king has been disfigured by that variety of orthography which prevailed at this time, and often confuses history. Ethelwulphus, Ethulfus, Athulfus, Adulfus, Aithulfus, Adhelwlfus, Athelwlfus, Atwulfus.

[5] Malmsbury's expressions are, natura lenis et qui sub quiete degere quam multis provinciis imperitare mallet — crassioris et hebetis ingenii. p. 37. — mansuetoris ingenii — segnem, p. 247.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

tutor of Ethelwulph: he was powerful, warlike, and intelligent. He had the good and rare fortune to enjoy his preferments for fifty years. He endeavoured to rouse the king to those exertions which his dignity made a duty. He provided supplies for his exchequer, and he laboured to organise a military force. His wise measures, though sometimes baffled by an incompetent execution, and by the suddenness of aggressions, which no vigilance could prevent, had the general success of punishing many insults, and of preserving the country from a permanent conquest.[6]

NOTHING is more curious nor more interesting in history than to remark that when great political exigencies evolve, which threaten to shake the foundations of civil society, they are usually as much distinguished by the rise of sublime characters, with genius and ability sufficient to check the progress of the evil, and even to convert its disasters to benevolent issues. One of these extraordinary persons was ALFRED the Great, and, considered with regard to the time of his appearance, the great ends which he achieved, and the difficulties under which he formed himself, no historical character can more justly claim our attention and admiration than our venerated king.

ETHELWULPH had married Osberga, the daughter of Oslac, a man mentioned with an epithet of celebrity, and the king's cup-bearer. Oslac had sprung from the chieftain, who, in the time of Cer-

[6] Though Alstan had stripped his monastery of some of its advantages, our William, in his history, p. 37., and his Gest. pont. 247., commemorates him with an encomium which is liberal and strongly featured.

Digitized by Google

dic, had obtained the Isle of Wight.[7] After three elder sons, Osberga was delivered of Alfred, at Wantage, in Berkshire.[8] She is highly extolled for her piety and understanding; but the education of Alfred must have lost the benefit of her talents, because his father married another lady before the sixth year of his childhood had expired. She is said to have given him to Swithin, the preceptor of his father, to be taught.[9] The bishop may have nurtured or infused that habitual piety for which Alfred was remarkable; but was unquestionably unfit for the office of literary tutor, as Alfred passed his childhood without knowing how to read.

Alfred's birth. 849.

THEIR successes in France having enlarged the horizon of the Northmen's ambition, every new aggression on England became more formidable than the preceding. In 851, they first ventured to winter in the Isle of Thanet.[10] This was a new æra in their habits. Their ancient custom had been to pirate abroad in the summer, but to return with the autumn. But Ragnar's success in France had increased their daring, and enlarged their

[7] Asser de rebus gestis Ælfredi, p. 4. ed. Ox. 1722. Oslac was alive at his grandson's birth, for he signed a charter as the ambassador of Ethelwulph, which the king of Mercia gave to Croyland in 851. Ingulf, p. 15.

[8] Asser, p. 3., adds, that the country was called Berroc scire a berroc silva ubi buxus abundantissime nascitur.

[9] Rudborne Hist. mag. p. 207. There is a beautiful MS. on St. Swithin, written by Lantfredus in the tenth century, in the British Museum. Bib. Reg. xv. c. 7. But it contains an account of his miracles only, to justify his canonisation in the reign of Edgar. One part is a curious Latin alphabetical or acrostic hymn.

[10] Sax. Chron. 74. Asser, p. 5., places the winter residence in Shepey Isle; but the printed Chronicle dates their first wintering in Shepey in 854. The MSS. Sax. Chron. Tib. B. 4. has 855.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

852.

views. They had now formed the daring project of remaining in the countries which they insulted.

In the spring they attempted against the Anglo-Saxons the most serious invasion which England had yet experienced. Their numbers, perhaps the result of a confederation, were superior to any preceding attack. They entered the Thames with 350 ships, plundered Canterbury and London, and marched into Mercia. The names of all their chieftains are not mentioned; but as Ragnar Lodbrog was now in full activity, he may have led or aided the invaders.

Mercia had been governed by Withtlaf till 838. His son and wife reached the tomb before him, and he buried them by the side of Etheldritha, the daughter of Offa. She had sheltered him from the pursuit of Egbert, and his grateful feelings were so ardent, that when he heard of her death, his grief confined him to his bed, and it was with difficulty afterwards that he was withdrawn from her grave. His brother Bertulph succeeded, and signalised his reign by favouring the assassination of his brother's grandson; his own son was the murderer; love of power was the cause. Bertulph was king of Mercia, when the northern warriors entered his dominions[11]; he endeavoured to repel them, but was defeated.[12]

The Northmen after this victory turned southward and entered Surry. The West-Saxons collected under Ethelwulph and his son Ethelbald, and at Aclea, a field of oaks, the two nations met,

[11] Ingulf, 11. Sax. Chron. 74. Mr. Hume erroneously says that Brichtric governed Mercia at this period, p. 71.

[12] Sax. Chron. 74. Flor. Wig. 295.

Digitized by Google

and a battle ensued, which the desperate courage of both armies made long and very deadly. It was not until the greatest part of the invaders had perished, that they lost their ground. The English at last triumphed; the battle was so destructive, that Asser, who lived in the period when the Northmen maintained the most furious contests, yet attests that so great a slaughter of the invaders had never been known before that day, or during his experience since.[13]

The Earl of Devonshire had already defeated them at Wenbury in that county, and Æthelstan, the subordinate king of Kent, with the earl Ealhere, had enjoyed a similar success at Sandwich, where nine of their ships were taken.[14]

[13] Asser, p. 6. Voltaire has strangely confounded this invasion with that against Ethelred, above a century later. He says, "On prétend qu'en 852, ils remontèrent la Tamise avec trois cens voiles. Les Anglais *ne se défendèrent* mieux que les Francs. Ils *payèrent* comme eux leurs vainqueurs. Un roi nommé *Ethelbert* suivit le malheureux exemple de Charles le chauve. Il *donna de l'argent.*" Essai sur les Mœurs. Oeuvres completes, t. 16. p. 472. ed. 1785. In his previous paragraphs, he confounds the Britons with the English. "Les *Anglais*, —ils n'étaient échappés du joug des Romains que pour tomber sous celui de ces *Saxons.*" Ibid.

[14] Asser, p. 6. Sax. Chron. 74. There is some confusion about Ethelstan; by three authors (Hunting. 345., Mailros, 142., and Hoveden, 412.,) he is styled the brother of Ethelwulph. But Flor. Wig. 291., Ethelwerd, 841., Malmsbury, 37., and the printed Saxon Chronicle, make him the son. The MS. Saxon Chronicle, in the Cotton Library, Tib. B. 4., differs from the printed one, for it calls him the son of Egbert. It says, "ꝑenꝛ Ꝿthelpulꝼ hiꝛ ꝑunu to Weꝛt Seaxna ꝓice; anꝺ Ꝿthelꝛtan hiꝛ oꝺheꝛ ꝑunu, ꝑenꝛ to Cantꝛapa ꝓice, anꝺ to Suthꝓiꝛean, anꝺ to Suthꝓeaxna ꝓice," p. 30. Matt. West. 301., and Rudborne, 201., make him Ethelwulph's illegitimate son. Asser's testimony, p. 6., would decide that he was the son of Ethelwulph; but that these descriptive words are wanting in the Cotton MSS. of his book. Bromton says, Ethelwulph had a son, Athelstan; but that he died in annis adolescentiæ suæ, 802. Malmsbury states, that Ethelwulph gave to him the provinces which Egbert had conquered, 37. Ethelstan is mentioned by Fordun to have perished in a battle against the Picts, lib. iv. c. 14. p. 666. In 850 he signed a

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

THE Mercian succession of sovereigns was now drawing to its close. Beortulf was succeeded in 852 by Burrhed the last king of Mercia, who in the next year requested the assistance of Ethelwulph against the Britons of Wales.[15] Burrhed had already fought a battle, in which Merfyn Frych the British king fell, and was succeeded by Roderic, who has obtained in Welsh history the epithet of Mawr, or the Great.[16] But an epithet like this rather expresses the feelings of his countrymen, than the merit of his character. It may be just in provincial history as long as that exists in its local seclusion; but the force of the expression vanishes when the person it accompanies is brought forward into more general history in an enlightened age. He who was great in his little circle or ruder times, becomes then diminutive and obscure; and it is almost ludicrous to apply one of the most splendid symbols of recorded merit, to actions so inconsiderable, and to characters so ambiguous as a petty Welsh prince. The grand epithets of history should be reserved for those who can abide a comparison with the illustrious of every age, like the lofty mountains of nature, which, whether existing in Italy, in Tartary, or Chili, are admired for their sublimity by every spectator, and in every period.

853. RODERIC endured the invasion of Ethelwulph and Burrhed, who penetrated with victorious ravages to Anglesey.[17] Ethelwulph gave his daugh-

charter as king of Kent. Thorpe, Reg. Roff. p. 23. Dr. Whittaker supposes him to have been St. Neot, but this is rather a hazarded than an authorised conjecture.

[15] Asser, 6. [16] Wynne's Hist. p. 27.

[17] Wynne, 27. Asser, 7. Sax. Chron. 75.

Digitized by Google

ter Ethelswitha in marriage to the Mercian, and the nuptial solemnities were celebrated royally at Chippenham.[18] CHAP. IV. 853.

THE vikingr appeared again in Thanet. Ealhere, with the armed men of Kent, and Huda, with those of Surry, overwhelmed the invaders with the first fury of their battle; but the conflict was obstinately renewed, the English chiefs fell, and after many of both armies had been slain or drowned, the pirates obtained the victory.[19]

Alfred sent to Rome.

IN the fifth year of Alfred's age, his father, although he had three elder sons, seems to have formed an idea of making him his successor. This intention is inferred from the facts that Ethelwulph sent him at this time to Rome, with a great train of nobility and others; and that the pope anointed him king, at the request of his father.[20]

At Rome again in 855.

IT is expressly affirmed, that the king loved Alfred better than his other sons.[21] When the king went to Rome himself two years afterwards, he took Alfred with him, because he loved him with superior affection.[22] The presumption that

[18] Asser, 7. Matt. West. 305. Burrhed therefore became Alfred's brother-in-law. Voltaire calls him inaccurately his uncle. Comme Burred son oncle, p. 473.

[19] Asser, 7. Ragnar's Quida mentions one of his exploits at an English promontory, where the English noble Walthiofr fell. See before, note 45.

[20] So Florence, 296.; Sim. Dun. 139.; Rad. diceto. 450.; Chron. Mailros, 142.; Matt. West. 307.; and Cron. Joan. Taxton, MSS. Cotton. Lib. Julius, A. 1., affirm. As St. Neot the son or brother of Ethelwulph went, about this period, seven times to Rome, his journies or his advice may have had some connection with this project.

[21] Cum communi et ingenti patris sui et matris amore supra omnes fratres suos. Asser, 15., Matt. West. 307., Sim. Dun. 141., Flor. Wig. 297., express the same fact.

[22] Filium suum Ælfredum iterum in eandem viam secum ducens *eo quod*, illum plus ceteris filiis suis diligebat. Asser, p. 8.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

855. he intended to make Alfred his successor, therefore, agrees with the fact of his paternal partiality. It is warranted by the declaration of Matthew of Westminster, that one of the causes of the rebellion which followed against Ethelwulph was, that he had caused Alfred to be crowned, thereby, as it were, excluding his other children from the chance of succession.[23]

In Alfred's journey through France, he was very hospitably treated by Bertinus and Grimbald.[24] When Alfred arrived in the course of nature at the royal dignity, he remembered Grimbald's services and talents, requited them by a steady friendship, and obtained from them an important intellectual benefit.

855. Ethelwulph's donation of the tenths.

In 855, Ethelwulph, with the sanction of his witena gemot, made that donation to the church which is usually construed to be the grant of its tithes. But on reading carefully the obscure words of the three copies of this charter, which three succeeding chroniclers have left us, it will appear that it cannot have been the original grant of the tithes of all England. These words imply either that it was a liberation of the land which the clergy had before been in possession of, from all the services and payments to which the Anglo-Saxon lands were generally liable[25], or that it was an additional

[23] Causa autem bifaria erat, una quod filium juniorem Ælfredum quasi aliis a sorte regni exclusis, in regem Romæ fecerat coronari. Matt. West. p. 308.

[24] Vita Grimbaldi. Lel. Collect. i. p. 18.

[25] Ingulf, Malmsbury, and Matt. West. profess to give copies of the charter. The king, (in Ingulf's copy,) after reciting the depredations of the Northmen, adds, with some confusion of grammar and style, "Wherefore I, Ethelwulph, king of the West Saxons, with the advice of my bishops and princes, affirming a salutary counsel, and

Digitized by Google

gift of land, not of tithes, either of the king's private patrimony, or of some other which is not explained. The reason for the gift which is added in the charter strengthens the first supposition[26]; but the terms used to express the persons to whom the benefit was granted seem to confine it to[27] monastical persons. But whatever was its original meaning, the clergy in after-ages interpreted it to mean

CHAP. IV.

855.

uniform remedy, we have consented that I have adjudged some hereditary portion of land to all degrees *before possessing it*, whether male or female servants of God, serving him, or poor laymen; always the tenth mansion: where that may be the least, then the tenth part of all goods should be given in perpetual freedom to the church, so that it may be safe and protected from all secular services and royal contributions greater or smaller, or taxations which we call wynterden; and that it may be free from all things; and without the military expedition, building of bridges, and constructions of fortresses." Ing. Hist. p. 17. Malmsbury's copy corresponds with this; but for "then the tenth part of all goods," it has "yet the tenth part," omitting the words, "of all goods," and changing "tum" into "tamen." p. 41. Matt. West. p. 306. gives it a different aspect: he makes it like an absolute hereditary gift, but converts the general term "land," used by the others, into "my land." Thus "I grant some portion of *my* land to be *possessed in perpetual right*, to wit, the tenth part of *my land*, that it may be free from all offices, and secular services, and royal tributes," &c., adding the same reason as above. The natural force of Matthew's words limits the lands given, to the king's own lands, which were only a small part of the kingdom, but gives a proprietary right more expressly than the others. I think there is no reason to believe that tithes were then first granted, but that this charter was meant to have the operation mentioned in the text.

[26] "That they may more diligently pour forth their prayers to God for us without ceasing; as we have *alleviated their servitude in some part*, 'eorum servitutem in aliqua parte levigamus.'" Ing. p. 17. Malmsb. 41. An alleviation of services is not a grant of tithes.

[27] The words in Ingulf are, "famulis et famulabus Dei, Deo servientibus sive laicis miseris." In Malmsbury the same, omitting the epithet "miseris." Famulabus cannot apply to rectors or curates; famulis et famulabus Dei, mean usually monks and nuns. The copy of Matthew of Westminster, for these words, substitutes "Deo et beatæ Mariæ, et omnibus sanctis." But Matthew wrote in the latter end of the thirteenth century. Ingulf's copy is about two centuries more ancient than his.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

a distinct and formal grant of the tithes of the whole kingdom.[28]

He went afterwards to Rome himself with great magnificence, accompanied by Alfred[29], who was entering his seventh year. As the expeditions of the great to Rome, were, in those days, usually by land, Ethelwulph went first into France, where Charles, the French king, received him with honour and royal liberality, and caused him to be conducted through his dominions with every respectful attention.[30]

His presents to the pope.

The presents which the West-Saxon king carried to the pope were peculiarly splendid. A crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds, two golden vessels called Baucas, a sword adorned with pure gold, two golden images, four Saxon dishes of silver gilt, besides valuable dresses, are enumerated by his contemporary Anastasius. The king also gave a donative of gold to all the Roman clergy and nobles, and silver to the people.[31]

[28] So Ingulf, and Malmsbury, and others state it; but all classes of men who have obtained a grant by deed, try to extend its meaning as far for their own benefit as the construction of the words can be carried. The law itself looks only at the sense of the words used. Asser's opinion of its import would be very valuable if it was clearly given: because, as a contemporary, we should gain from him the meaning given to it at its first publication. If his first sentence stood alone, it would confirm our first construction; but his rhetorical after-phrase adds something, which, if it means any thing more, I do not understand it. The passage stands thus: "He liberated the tenth part of all his kingdom from every royal service and contribution, and in an everlasting instrument in the cross of Christ for the redemption of his soul, and of his predecessors, he immolated to the triune Deity." I do not see that these latter words increase the meaning of the first, which express only a liberation from burthens. They seem to add that he offered this liberation as a sacrifice to the Deity.

[29] Asser, 9.

[30] Annales Bertiniani in Bouquet's Recueil, tom. vii. p. 71.

[31] Anastasius Bibliothecarius de vitis Pontif. vol. i. p. 403. ed. Rome, 1718.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

ETHELWULPH continued a year at Rome, and rebuilt the Saxon school which Ina had founded.[32] By the carelessness of its English inhabitants, it had been set on fire the preceding year, and was burnt to ashes.[33] One act which he did at Rome evinces his patriotism and influence, and entitles him to honourable remembrance. He saw that the public penitents and exiles were bound with iron, and he obtained an order from the pope that no Englishman, out of his country, should be put into bonds for penance.[34]

855.

IN his way through France, he discovered that senility gave no exemption from love. In July he sued for an alliance with Judith, the daughter of Charles, and in October was married to her by Hincmar. He admitted her to share in the royal dignity, and the diadem was placed on her head. Presents worthy of the high characters concerned were mutually given, and Ethelwulph took shipping for England.[35]

856. His marriage with Judith.

FEW marriages of our sovereigns have been more important in their consequences to the reputation and happiness of England than this, which at the time might have appeared censurable from the disparity of the ages of the parties, and from our aversion to see the hoary head imitating the youthful bridegroom. It was this lady who began

[32] Rudborne, 202. Anastasius describes it as an habitation; quæ in eorum lingua burgus discitur, p. 317. The place where it was situated, was called the Saxon-street, Saxonum vicum. Anast. 363. This school was much attended to by the Anglo-Saxon nobles and sovereigns.

[33] Anastasius, p. 317. [34] Rudborne, 202.

[35] Annales Bertiniani, p. 72. — Asser, 8. The ceremony used at the coronation of Judith yet exists, and may be seen in Du Chesne's Hist. Franc. vol. ii. p. 423.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

the education of Alfred; and to her therefore may be traced all his literary acquisitions.

856. The revolt of Wessex.

But the connubial felicity of Ethelwulph was interrupted by intelligence of a successful conspiracy against his power, which menaced him with deposition and exile. It was conducted by Alstan, the bishop, to whom he owed all his prosperity; and Ethelbald, the eldest of the legitimate princes, was placed at the head. The earl of Somerset participated in the rebellion. The principal object was to defeat the plans of Ethelwulph in favour of Alfred, and to invest Ethelbald with the crown.[36] The popular reason was, the elevation of his new wife to the dignity of queen. The crimes of Eadburga had incited the Anglo-Saxon nation to forbid the wife of any other of their kings to be crowned.[37] Ethelwulph's visit to Rome without having resigned his crown may have begun the discontent. Two of the preceding sovereigns of Wessex who had taken this step, Cadwalla and Ina, had first abdicated the throne, though Offa retained it during his journey. But Ethelwulph had been in the church, and had not the warlike character of Offa to impress or satisfy his thanes and eorls. For him therefore to pursue the steps that were so like a re-assumption of his early ecclesiastical character may have dissatisfied the fierce Anglo-Saxons, who thought little of religion until some

[36] Matt. West. 308. Rudborne also states, that some write, quod filii insurrexerunt contra patrem propter invidiam quod frater minimus, viz. Alfredus ante omnes inunctus erat in regem jussione paterna, p. 201.

[37] Asser, 10, 11. See before, p. 427. This degradation of their sovereign's queen was contrary, says Asser, to the custom of all the German nations.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

event roused them to renounce the world altogether.

856. His deposition.

In Selwood Forest the revolters first assembled in strength. The king's absence favoured the scheme; and as his devotion to the Roman see, combined with the prospect of a stripling's succession, to the prejudice of brothers, who to priority of birth added maturity of age, may have diminished the general loyalty; so the circumstances of his marriage concurred, fortunately for the conspirators, to complete his unpopularity. When Ethelwulph returned, he found the combination too powerful to be resisted; but the nobles of all Wessex would not permit him to be absolutely dethroned; they promoted an accommodation between the two parties, on the plan, that Ethelbald should be put in possession of West Saxony, the best portion of the monarchy[38], and that Ethelwulph should be contented with the eastern districts which Ethelstan had enjoyed. The king, averse to war, and perhaps intimidated by the strength of his opponents, submitted to the proposition.[39]

[38] Asser, 9. He remarks that occidentalis pars Saxoniæ semper orientali principalior est, ibid.

[39] There is a complimentary letter of Lupus, a French abbot, to Ethelwulph, still existing, soliciting him to be at the expence of covering the church of his monastery with lead. In this he speaks of the good opinion which had spread of Ethelwulph's government, and of the reputation he had acquired by his exertions against the enemies of Christianity, alluding to his victories over the Northmen. Epist. Lupi Bib. Mag. vol. iii. p. 625.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

The Reigns of ETHELBALD *and* ETHELBERT. — ALFRED's *Education.*

BOOK IV. 856—860.

BY wresting the sceptre of Wessex from the hand of his father, Ethelbald gained a very short interval of regal pomp. The old king survived the disappointment of his hope and the diminution of his power but two years, and Ethelbald outlived him scarcely three more. Ethelwulph, by his will, left landed possessions to three of his sons; and it is a proof of his placable disposition, that Ethelbald was one; the others were Ethelred and Alfred; the survivor of the three was to inherit the bequest.[1] His other son, his daughter, and kinsmen, and also his nobles, partook of his testamentary liberality. His will displayed both the equity and the piety of his mind.[2]

SOON after Ethelwulph's decease, Ethelbald married his widow, Judith, in defiance of religious institutions and the customs of every Christian state.[3]

[1] See Alfred's will, published by Mr. Astle, which recites this devise.

[2] He ordered throughout all his lands, that in every ten manors one poor person, *either* a native or a foreigner, should be maintained in food and clothing, as long as the country contained men and cattle. He left the pope an hundred mancusses, and two hundred to illuminate St. Peter's and St. Paul's churches at Rome on Easter eve and the ensuing dawn. Asser, 13.

[3] Asser, 23. But this author, and they who follow him, are wrong in stating that this was against the custom of the pagans; for Eadbald, king of Kent, had done the same in 616; and the Saxon Chronicle, in mentioning that event, says, he lived "on hethenum theape spa, thaet he hæfde hiy fæderen lape to pive," p. 26.

Digitized by Google

On the exhortations of Swithin, he is represented to have dismissed her, and to have passed the remainder of his short life in reputation and justice.[4] He died in 860. 856.

Judith's third marriage.

Some time after the death of Ethelbald, Judith sold her possessions in England, and returning to her father, lived at Senlis with regal dignity. Here she was seen by Baldwin, surnamed the Arm of Iron, whom she married. He was descended from the count, who had cultivated and occupied Flanders.[5] The pope reconciled him with the king of France, her father[6], who gave to Baldwin all the region between the Scheld, the Sambre, and the sea, and created him count of the empire, that he might be the bulwark of the French kingdom against the Northmen.[7]

Baldwin built Bruges in 856, as a fortress to coerce them, and died in 880, having enjoyed his honours with peculiar celebrity.[8]

860. Ethelbert accedes

On the death of Ethelbald, the kingdom of Wessex became the possession of Ethelbert, his

[4] Matt. West. 310. Rudborne, 204.

[5] Annales Bertiniani Bouquet, tom. vii. p. 77.—The Genealogia comitum Flandriæ scripta seculo 12, says, A. 792, Lidricus Harlebecensis comes videns Flandriam vacuam et incultam et nemorosam occupavit eam. Ibid. p. 81., he was the great grandfather of Baldwin. Previous to Baldwin, Flanders was in the hands of foresters, Espinoy's Recherches, p. 5.

[6] The pope's letters to Charles, and his queen, Hermentrudes, are in Miræi opera diplomatica, i. p. 132. Hincmar's letter to the pope, stating what he had done in obedience to his order, is in the same work, p. 25. The pope hints to Charles, that if his anger lasted, Baldwin might join the Northmen.

[7] Meyer Annales Flandriæ, 13. For the same purpose, Theodore was made the first count of Holland at this time, ibid.

[8] The author of the Life of S. Winnoc, written in the eleventh century, says, Flanders never had a man his superior in talent and warlike ability, 7 Bouquet, p. 379.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

brother, who had been already reigning in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.

860. In his days, the tranquillity of England was again endangered; a large fleet of the northern vikingr suddenly appeared off Winchester, and ravaged it; but as they were retiring with their plunder, they were overtaken and chased to their ships by the earls of Hampshire and Berkshire.

Their commander led them from England to France; with above 300 ships they ascended the Seine, and Charles averted their hostilities from his own domains by money. The winter forbidding them to navigate the sea, they dispersed themselves along the Seine and the adjacent shores in different bands.[9] Such incursions induced the Flemings to build castles and fortified places.[10]

In 864, they wintered in Thanet. While the Kentish men were offering money, to be spared from their ravages, they broke from their camp at night, and ravaged all the east of the country. Ethelbert was, like his brother, taken off prematurely, after a short, but honourable reign of six years, and was buried in Shireburn.[11] He left some children[12], but Ethelred, his brother, acceded in their stead.

His death. 866.

[9] Annales Bertiniani. One expression of these annals is curious: it says, that the Northmen divided themselves, secundum suas sodalitates, as if they had been an union of different companies associated for the expedition.

[10] Ob tam furibundas septentrionalium barbarorum incursiones Flandri in suis pagis castellis que munitiones facere ceperunt. Meyer. Ann. Fland. 12.

[11] Asser, 14.

[12] They are mentioned in Alfred's will. About this time, Ruric, a prince of the Waregi, obtained the empire of Russia, and fixing his seat at Novogardia, which he adorned with buildings, occasioned all Russia to have that name. Chronicon Theod. Kiow, cited by Langb. i. p. 554.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

866. Alfred's youth and education.

DURING the reigns of his brethren, Alfred was quietly advancing into youth and manhood. When an illustrious character excites our attention, it is natural to inquire whether any unusual circumstances distinguished his early years. This curiosity arises, not from the expectation of beholding an extraordinary being, acting to astonish us in the features and dress of infancy, because it is probable, that in the beginning of life no indications of future greatness appear. Healthy children are in general sprightly; and the man destined to interest ages by his mature intellect, cannot be distinguished amid the universal animation and activity of his delighted play-fellows. But as the evolution of genius, and its luxuriant fertility, depend much upon the accidents of its experience, it becomes important to notice those events which have occurred to an illustrious individual, during the first periods of life, that we may trace their influence in producing or determining the tendencies of his manly character, and in shaping his future fortunes. The minds of all men, in every portion of their lives, are much actuated by the impressions received, and by the ideas retained from their preceding experience. As the events of childhood affect its future youth, those of its youth influence its manhood, and that also impresses its subsequent age. Hence they who wish to study the formation of great characters must attentively consider the successive circumstances of their previous stages of life.

THE first years of Alfred's life were marked by incidents unusual to youth. When he was but four years old, he was sent by his father to travel by land through France, and over the Alps to Rome, accompanied with a large retinue. He was brought

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 866.

back in safety from this journey; and in his seventh year he attended his father in a similar expedition, and resided with him a year in that distinguished city. Although Alfred at these periods was but a child, yet the varied succession of scenes and incidents, and the new habits, privations, alarms, and vicissitudes with which such dangerous and toilsome journeys must have abounded, could not occur to his perception without powerfully exciting and instructing his young intellect. His residence twice at Rome, in which so many monuments of ancient art were then visible to rouse the enthusiasm and interest the curiosity of the observer, must have left impressions on his mind, not likely to have forsaken it, of the superiority and civilisation of the people, whose celebrity was every where resounded, and whose noble works he was contemplating.[13] The survey of the ruins of the capitol has excited some to the arduous toil of literary composition[14], and their remembrance may have produced in the mind of Alfred that eagerness for knowledge, which so usefully distinguished his maturer years.

In his eighth year he received a new train of associations from his residence in the court of France, during his father's courtship and marriage with Judith. An urbanity of manners, and a cultivation of knowledge, vigorous because recent, distinguished the Francs at that time from the other

[13] Besides the remains of ancient taste, Alfred must have seen there the most perfect productions of the time, as the pope was perpetually receiving a great variety of rich presents from Constantinople, and every other Christian country. See many of these mentioned in Anastasius.

[14] Mr. Gibbon mentions that he conceived the first idea of writing his history while sitting on the ruins of the Capitol.

Digitized by Google

Gothic nations. Alfred seems to have been inspired by them with some desire of improvement, though the occupations and contrary tastes of his father confined his wishes to a latent sentiment. CHAP. V.

From his eighth year to his twelfth, his biography is less certain. If it be true, as some chronicles intimate, that infirm health occasioned his father, in obedience to the superstition of the day, to send him to Modwenna, a religious lady in Ireland, celebrated into sanctity[15], such an expedition must, by its new and contrasting scenes, have kept his curiosity alive, and have amplified his information. The disposition to improve may also have been increased, if not produced, within him, by the reputation of his namesake, Alfred of Northumbria.

But though Alfred's mind may have abounded with excited capability, eager to know, and emulous of distinction[16], it had received none of that fruitful cultivation which is gained in literary education, from the transmitted wisdom of other times; from the unobtrusive eloquence of books. Alfred had been a favourite; and of such children, indulgences and ignorance are too often the lot. Happily, his father's misfortunes and new connection rescued him from that ruin of temper and mind which sometimes disappoints the fairest promises of nature.

Alfred's intellect first displayed itself in a fondness for the only mental object which then

[15] Hist. aurea Johan. Tinmuth, MSS. in Bib. Bodl. cited by Dugdale. Monast. i. p. 197. Higden also mentions it, p. 256.

[16] Asser says of him, cui ab incunabulis ante omnia et cum omnibus presentis vitæ studiis, sapientiæ desiderium cum nobilitate generis, nobilis, mentis ingenium supplevit, p. 16.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

866.

existed to attract it. This was the Anglo-Saxon poetry. It was in a rude and simple state, and barren of all that we now admire in the productions of the muses. But it was stately and heroical. It tended to confer fame, and was therefore adapted to rouse the mind to seek it. Hence to Alfred the Saxon poems, being the best which were then accessible to him, were impressive and delightful. By day and by night, he was an assiduous auditor, whenever they were recited.[17] As he listened, the first aspirings of a soaring mind seem to have arisen within him; and they prepared him to desire larger draughts of that intellectual fountain, whose scantiest waters were so sweet. He became at last to be a versifier himself. But the great cause of the dearth of intellectual cultivation at that period was, that few would learn to read. Alfred had passed eleven years without having acquired this easy though inestimable accomplishment. A prince, son of a father who had been educated for the church; who had twice visited Rome, and resided at Paris after Charlemagne had improved his people, was yet passing into youth without the simplest of all tuition, which the poorest infant is now invited and urged to attain. That he received it at last was owing to his step-mother, Judith. When Alfred was twelve years old, she was sitting one day, surrounded by her family, with a manuscript of Saxon poetry in her hands. As Aldhelm and Cedmon had written poems of great popularity, it may have contained some of theirs. That she was able to read is not surprising, because she was a Franc, and the Francs had received from the Anglo-Saxons a taste for literary pursuits, and

[17] Asser, p. 16.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.

866.

were cultivating them with superior ardour. With a happy judgment she proposed it as a gift to him who would the soonest learn to read it. The whole incident may have been chance play, but it was fruitful of consequences. The elder princes, one then a king, the others in mature youth or manhood, thought the reward inadequate to the task, and were silent. But the mind of Alfred, captivated by the prospect of information, and pleased with the beautiful decoration of the first letter of the writing, inquired if she actually intended to give it to such of her children as would the soonest learn to understand and repeat it. His mother repeating the promise with a smile of joy at the question, he took the book, found out an instructor, and learnt to read it. When his industry had crowned his wishes with success, he recited it to her.[18] To this important, though seemingly trivial incident, we owe all the intellectual cultivation, and all the literary works of Alfred; and all the benefit which by these he imparted to his countrymen. If this family conversation had not occurred, Alfred would probably have lived and died as ignorant, as unimportant, and as little known as his three brothers. For the momentous benefit thus begun to Alfred, the memory of Judith deserves our gratitude. His brothers had reached manhood without having been taught letters by their father, who, though he had received an ecclesiastical education, had left both them and Alfred illiterate. Nine years old at his father's death, and yet wholly uninstructed; with one brother on the throne, and two more so

[18] Asser, p. 16.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 866.

near it as ultimately to succeed to it, equally uneducated; and surrounded by nobles as ignorant, and with no lettered clergy about the throne, whence could Alfred have received this necessary introduction to all his improvement, if the more intelligent Judith, the granddaughter of Charlemagne, had not been transplanted by Ethelwulf from Paris to England, and even detained there by Ethelbald? This French princess was the kind Minerva from whom arose the first shoots of that intellectual character which we admire in Alfred. To such remote and apparently unconnected causes do we often owe our greatest blessings.

But in learning to read Saxon, Alfred had only entered a dark and scanty anti-room of knowledge. The Saxon language was not at that day the repository of literature. The learned of the Anglo-Saxons, Bede, Alcuin, and others, had written their useful works in Latin, and translations of the classics had not then been thought of. Alfred's first acquisition was therefore of a nature which rather augmented his own conviction of his ignorance, than supplied him with the treasures which he coveted. He had yet to master the language of ancient Rome, before he could become acquainted with the compositions which contained the main facts of history, the elegance of poetry, and the disquisitions of philosophy. He knew where these invaluable riches lay, but he was unable to appropriate them to his improvement. We are told that it was one of his greatest lamentations, and, as he conceived, among his severest misfortunes, and which he often mentioned with deep sighs, that when he had youth and leisure, and permission to learn, he could not find teachers. No good masters,

Digitized by Google

capable of initiating him in that language, in which the minds he afterwards studied had conversed and written, were at that time to be found in all the kingdom of Wessex.[19] 866.

His love for knowledge made him neither effeminate nor slothful. The robust labours of the chase ingrossed a large portion of his leisure; and he is panegyrised for his incomparable skill and felicity in this rural art.[20] To Alfred, whose life was indispensably a life of great warlike exertion, the exercise of hunting may have been salutary and even needful. Perhaps his commercial and polished posterity may wisely permit amusements more philanthropic to diminish their attachment to this dubious pursuit.

He followed the labours of the chase as far as Cornwall. His fondness for this practice is a striking proof of his activity of disposition, because he appears to have been afflicted with a disease which would have sanctioned indolence in a person less alert. This malady assumed the appearance of a slow fever, of an unusual kind, with symptoms that made some call it the piles. It pursued him from his infancy. But his life and actions show, that, though this debilitating disease was succeeded by another that haunted him incessantly with tormenting agony, nothing could suppress his unwearied and inextinguishable genius. Though en-

[19] Asser, p. 17.

[20] Asser, p. 16. Though men fond of literature have not often excelled in the robust exercises, yet some remarkable characters have been distinguished for corporal agility. Thus the great Pythagoras was a successful boxer in the Olympic games; the first who boxed according to art. Cleanthes, the Stoic, was a similar adept. His scholar, Chrysippus, the acutest of the Stoics, was at first a racer; and even Plato himself was a wrestler at the Isthmian and Pythian games. Bentley on Phalaris, 51—54.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 866.

vironed with difficulties which would have shipwrecked any other man, his energetic spirit converted them into active instruments to advance him to virtue and to fame.

His religious impressions led him from his childhood to be a frequent visitor at sacred places, for the purposes of giving alms, and offering prayer. It was from this practice, that as he was hunting in Cornwall, near Liskeard, and observing a village church near, he dismounted, and went into it. A Cornish man of religion, called St. Gueryr, had been buried there. The name implied that he had possessed medical powers or reputation; and with a sudden hope of obtaining relief from his distressing malady Alfred prostrated himself there in silent prayer to God, and remained a long time mentally petitioning that his sufferings might be alleviated. He solicited any change of the divine visitations that would not make him useless in body or contemptible in his personal appearance; for he was afraid of leprosy or blindness, but he implored relief. His devotions ended, he quitted the tomb of the saint, and resumed his journey. No immediate effect followed. He had often prayed before for relief in vain: but now, in no long space afterwards, his constitution experienced a beneficial alteration, and this complaint entirely ceased, though after his marriage it was succeeded by another and a worse, which lasted till his death.[21]

For a while we must leave Alfred aspiring to

[21] Asser, 40. Flor. Wig. 309. Guerir, in Cornish, signifies to heal or cure. Camden places the church near Liskeard. St. Neot lived here after Guerir, and it acquired the name from him of Neotstoke. Whit. Neot. 109.

Digitized by Google

become the student, to describe that storm of desolation and ferocious war which was proceeding from the North to intercept the progress, and disturb the happiness of the future king; and to lay waste the whole island, with havock the most sanguinary, and ruin the most permanent.

CHAP. V.

868.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

The Accession of ETHELRED, *the third Son of* ETHELWULPH.—*The Arrival of the Sons of* RAGNAR LODBROG *in* ENGLAND.—*Their Revenge on* ELLA.—*Conquests and Depredations.*—ETHELRED'*s Death.*

BOOK IV. 866—871.

As the life of Ragnar Lodbrog had disturbed the peace of many regions of Europe, his death became the source of peculiar evil to England. When his sons heard of his fate in the prison in Northumbria, they determined on revenge. Their transient hostilities as sea-kings were laid aside for the gratification of this passion; and as their father's fame was the conversation and pride of the North, they found that wherever they spread news of his catastrophe, and their own resolutions to avenge it, their feelings were applauded, and auxiliaries procured to join them, from every part. Bands of warriors confederated from every region for this vindictive object. Jutes, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Russians, and others; all the fury and all the valour of the North assembled for the expedition[1], while none of the Anglo-Saxon kings even suspected the preparations.

EIGHT kings and twenty earls, the children, relatives, and associates of Ragnar, were its leaders.[2]

[1] 2 Langb. 278. Saxo, 176. Al Beverl. 92. Hunt. 347. M. West. 316. Bromton, 803. Sim. Dun. 13. Al. Riev. 353.

[2] The kings were Bacseg, Halfden, Ingwar, Ubba, Guthrums, Oskitel, Amund and Eowls. Al. Bev. 93. Simeon adds to the kings, Sidroc, with a jarl of that name; Frena and Harald, p. 14.

Digitized by Google

Their armament assembled without molestation, and when it had become numerous enough to promise success to their adventure, Halfden, Ingwar, and Hubba, three of Ragnar's sons, assumed the command, sailed out of the Baltic, and conducted it safely to the English coasts By some error in the pilotage, or accident of weather, or actual policy, it passed Northumbria, and anchored off the shores of East Anglia.

Ethelred was scarcely seated on his brother's throne, before the great confederacy began to arrive. It found the country in a state auspicious to an invasion. Four distinct governments divided its natural force, whose narrow policy saw nothing but triumph and safety in the destruction of each other. One of these, the peculiar object of the hostility of the North, was plunged in a civil warfare.

Of the Anglo-Saxon governments, the kingdom of Northumbria had been always the most perturbed. Usurper murdering usurper, is the pervading incident. A crowd of ghastly monarchs pass swiftly along the page of history as we gaze; and scarcely was the sword of the assassin sheathed before it was drawn against its master, and he was carried to the sepulchre which he had just closed upon another. In this manner, during the last century and a half, no fewer than seventeen sceptred chiefs hurled each other from their joyless throne, and the deaths of the greatest number were accompanied by hecatombs of their friends.

When the Northern fleet suddenly appeared off East Anglia, such sanguinary events were still disturbing Northumbria. Osbert had been four years expelled by Ella from the throne which he

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

866.

had usurped from another, and at this juncture was formidable enough to dare his rival again to the ambitious field.[3]

THE Danish chieftains who first landed did not at once rush to their destined prey. Whether accident or policy had occasioned them to disembark in East Anglia, they made it a beneficial event. Awing the country by a force which the winds had never wafted from Denmark[4] before, they quietly passed the winter in their camp, collecting provisions and uniting their friends. They demanded a supply of horses from the king, who complied with their request, and mounted the greatest part of their army.[5] He attempted no enmity; he suffered them to enjoy their wintry feasts unmolested; no alliance with the other Saxon kingdoms was made during the interval; each state looked on with hope, that the collected tempest was to burst upon another; and as the menaced government was a rival, nothing but advantage was foreseen from its destruction.

THE Northern kings must have contemplated this behaviour with all the satisfaction and contempt of meditative mischief and conscious superiority. The Northumbrian usurpers at last sheathed, though tardily, the swords of contending ambition;

[3] Ella is called by Huntingdon degenerem, 349. Asser describes him as tyrannum quendam Ella nomine non de regali prosapia progenitum super regni apicem constituerant, p. 18.

[4] Al. Bev. 93.

[5] Asser, 15. The Icelanders intimate that the Northmen on their first arrival found Ella too powerful; and that Ingwar negotiated with him, and cultivated treasonable intercourse with his subjects, till the complete arrival of the invaders enabled him to prosecute his revenge. 2 Langb. 278.

Digitized by Google

and, on the advice of their nobles, united for their mutual defence and the general safety.[6]

866. THE invaders, although in many bands, like the Grecian host before Troy, yet submitted to the predominance of Ingwar and Ubbo, or Hubba, two of the sons of Ragnar. Of these two, Ingwar was distinguished for a commanding genius, and Ubbo for his fortitude; both were highly courageous, and inordinately cruel.[7]

867. IN the next spring, the invaders roused from their useful repose, and marched into Yorkshire. The metropolis of the county was their first object; and, on the first of March, it yielded to their attack. Devastation followed their footsteps; they extended their divisions to the Tyne, but, without passing it, returned to York.[8]

OSBERT and Ella, having completed their pacification, moved forwards, accompanied with eight of their earls, and on the 12th of April, assaulted the Northmen near York. The Danes, surprised by the attack, fled into the city. The English pursued with the eagerness of anticipated victory, broke down the slight walls[9], and entered, conflicting promiscuously with their enemies; but, having abandoned the great advantage of their superior discipline, the English rushed only to destruction. No nation could hope to excel the Northmen in personal intrepidity or manual dex-

[6] Hunt. 349. Asser, 18. So Sim. Dun. 14.

[7] Hunt. 348. Ubbo is called chief of the Frisians by Sim. Dun. 70. Adam of Bremen describes Ingwar as the most cruel of all, and as destroying Christians every where in torments, p. 14. He is also called Ivar.

[8] Sim. Dun. 14. In this year Ealstan died, the celebrated bishop and statesman. Asser, 18.

[9] Asser remarks, that York had not at this period walls so firm and stable as in the latter part of Alfred's reign, 18.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 867.

terity; from their childhood they were exercised in single combat and disorderly warfare; the disunited Northumbrians were therefore cut down with irremediable slaughter. Osbert and Ella, their chiefs, and most of their army perished.[10] The sons of Ragnar inflicted a cruel and inhuman retaliation on Ella, for their father's sufferings. They divided his back, spread his ribs into the figure of an eagle, and agonised his lacerated flesh by the addition of the saline stimulant.[11]

AFTER this battle, decisive of the fate of Northumbria, it appeared no more as an Anglo-Saxon kingdom. The people beyond the Tyne appointed Egbert as their sovereign, but in a few years he was expelled, and one Ricseg took the shadowy diadem. In 876 he died with grief at the distresses of his country, and another Egbert obtained the nominal honours.[12] But Ingwar was the Danish chief, who, profiting by his victory, assumed the sceptre of Northumbria from the Humber to the Tyne.[13]

A DISMAL sacrifice had been offered up to the manes of Ragnar, yet the invaders did not depart. It was soon evident that their object was to conquer, in order to occupy; desolation followed their victories, because Northmen could not move to battle

[10] Asser, 18. Sim. Dun. 14. The place where they fell was in Bromton's time called Ellescroft. Bromt. 803.

[11] Frag. Isl. 2 Lang. 279. Ragnar Saga, ib. The Scalld Sigvatr. ib. Saxo Gram. 177. This punishment was often inflicted by these savage conquerors on their enemies. See some instances in Stephanius, 193.

[12] Sim. Dun. 14. Matt. West. 326, 327, 328. Leland's Collect. ii. p. 373.

[13] The language of the Northern writers is, that Ivar obtained that part of England which his ancestors had possessed. Ragnar Saga, in Torfæus Series Dan. Olaff Tryggv. Saga, ib. 375. This adds that he reigned a long while, and died without issue, 376. So Frag. Isl. 2 Langb. 279.

Digitized by Google

without it; but while plunder was the concomitant of their march, dominion became the passion of their chiefs.

THE country was affected by a great dearth this year, which the presence of such enemies must have enhanced. Alfred had now reached his nineteenth year; he was raised by his brother to an inferior participation of the regal dignity, and he married Ealswitha, the daughter of a Mercian nobleman.[14] The earnestness with which Alfred in his Boetius speaks of conjugal affection implies that this union contributed greatly to his felicity. 867. Alfred's marriage.

THE Northmen having resolved on their plans of occupation and conquest, began to separate into divisions. One body rebuilt York, cultivated the country round it, and continued to colonise it.[15] It may be presumed that Ingwar headed these. Other bands devoted themselves to promote the ambition of those chieftains who also aspired to royal settlements.

THIS army passed the Humber into Mercia, and established themselves at Nottingham[16], where they wintered. Alarmed by their approach, Burrhed, the king, and his nobles, sent an urgent embassy to West Saxony for assistance. Ethelred, with judicious policy, hastened to his wishes. He joined 868.

[14] Ethelred, surnamed the Large. The mother of Alfred's queen was Eadburh, of the family of the Mercian kings. Asser frequently saw her before her death, and calls her a venerable woman. Her daughter's merit as a wife leads us to infer the excellence and careful nurture of the mother, 19.

[15] Sim. Dun. Vita St. Cuthberti, 71.

[16] Its British name was Tiguo Cobauc, the house of caves, Asser, 19. Ty, is a house in Welsh now; and cwb, a concavity. In the charter of 868, it is called Snothryngham, the house of Snothryng; which in the days of Ingulf had become changed to Nothingham, p. 18, 19.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

the Mercian with Alfred and the whole force of his dominions; and their united armies marched
868. towards the frontier through which the invaders had penetrated.

THEY found the Northmen in possession of Nottingham; the Danes discerned the great superiority of the allied armies, and remained within the strong walls and castle of the town.[17] The Anglo-Saxons were incapable of breaking through these fortifications, and their mutual respect, after an ineffectual struggle, occasioned a pacification, advantageous only to the Danes. The invaders were to retreat to York, and the kings of Wessex, satisfied with having delivered Mercia, and not discerning the danger of suffering the Northmen to remain in any part of the island, returned home.[18]

THE Northmen retired to York with great booty.[19] In this year two of the most terrible calamities to mankind occurred, a great famine, and its inevitable attendant, a mortality of cattle, and of the human race.[20] The general misery presented no temptations to the rapacity of the Northmen, and they remained a year in their Yorkshire stations.[21]

870. WHEN spring arrived, they threw off all disguise, and signalised this fourth year of their residence in

[17] Pagani munitione fortissimorum murorum et arcis validissimæ confidentes. Ingulf, 20. Burrhed in a charter to Croyland, dated Aug. 1. 868, states himself to have made it at Snothryngham before his brother's friends, and all his people assembled to besiege the pagans.

[18] Asser, 20., mentions no conflict; the Saxon Chronicle asserts, that an attack was made on the intrenchments, but disgraces the Anglo-Saxons, by adding, that it was not severe, p. 79. The monk of Croyland praises the young earl Algar, for his prowess in the affair, p. 18.

[19] Ingulf, 18—20.

[20] Asser, 20.

[21] Sax. Chron. 80. Asser, 20.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

England by a series of hostilities the most fatal, and of ravages the most cruel. They embarked on the Humber, and sailing to Lincolnshire, landed at Humberstan in Lindesey.[22] From this period, language cannot describe their devastations. It can only repeat the words plunder, murder, rape, famine, and distress. It can only enumerate towns, villages, churches and monasteries, harvests and libraries, ransacked and burnt. But by the incessant repetition, the horrors are diminished; and we read, without emotion, the narration of deeds which rent the hearts of thousands with anguish, and inflicted wounds on human happiness and human improvement, which ages with difficulty healed. Instead, therefore, of general statements, which glide as unimpressively over the mind as the arrow upon ice, it may be preferable to select a few incidents, to imply those scenes of desolation, which, when stated in the aggregate, only confuse and overwhelm the sensibility of our perception. 868.

After destroying the monastery, and slaying all the monks of the then much admired abbey of Bardeney, they employed the summer in desolating the country around with sword and fire.[23] About Michaelmas they passed the Witham, and entered the district of Kesteven[24] with the same dismal ministers of fate. The sovereign of the country made no effort of defence; but a patriotic few attempted to procure for themselves and the rest, that protection which their government did not impart.

[22] Lindesey was the largest of the three parts into which the county of Lincoln was anciently divided.

[23] Ingulf, 20.

[24] Kesteven was another of the three districts into which Lincolnshire was anciently divided.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

868.

THE brave earl Algar, in September, drew out all the youth of Hoiland[25]; his two seneschals, Wibert and Leofric, whose names the aged rustics that survived attached, with grateful memory, to their possessions, which they called Wiberton and Lefrington, assembled from Deeping, Langtoft, and Boston, 300 valiant and well appointed men; 200 more joined him from the Croyland monastery. They were composed chiefly of fugitives, and were led by Tolius, who had assumed the cowl; but who, previous to his entering the sacred profession, had been celebrated for his military character. Morcard, Lord of Brunne, added his family, who were undaunted and numerous. Osgot, the sheriff of Lincoln, a courageous and formidable veteran, collected 500 more from the inhabitants of the county. These generous patriots united in Kesteven, with the daring hope of checking, by their valour, the progress of the ferocious invaders.

Northmen advance to Croyland.

ON the feast of St. Maurice, they attacked the advanced bands of the Northmen with such auspicious bravery, that they slew three of their kings, and many of the soldiers. They chased the rest to the gates of their entrenchments, and, notwithstanding a fierce resistence, they assailed these, till the advance of night compelled the valiant earl to call off his noble army.[26]

WITH an unpropitious celerity, the other kings

[25] Hoiland or Holland; the southern division of Lincolnshire, which extended from the Witham to the Nine. Like the Batavian Holland, it was so moist, that the surface shook if stamped upon, and the print of the feet remained on it. It was composed of two parts, the lower and the upper. The lower was full of impassable marshes; huge banks preserved it from the ocean. Camd. 459.

[26] Ingulf, 20. Chron. St. Petri de Burgo, 16. The place where these three kings fell obtained the name of Trekyngham, or the three kings' home. It was before named Lacundon. Ing. 21.

Digitized by Google

of the Northmen, who had spread themselves over the country to plunder it, Godrun, Bacseg, Oskitul, Halfden, and Amond, together with Frenar, Ingwar, Ubbo, and the two Sidrocs, hastened, during the night, to re-unite their bands in the camp. An immense booty, and a numerous multitude of women and children, their spoil, accompanied them. 868.

The news of their unfortunate arrival reached the English stations, and produced a lamentable effect; for a large part of the small army, affrighted by the vast disproportion of numbers which in the ensuing morn they must encounter, fled during the darkness of the night. This desertion might have inspired and justified a general flight; but the rest, as though they had felt that their post was the Thermopylæ of England, with generous magnanimity and religious solemnity prepared themselves to perish for their country and their faith.

The brave Algar managed his diminished force with the wisest economy, and with soldierly judgment. He selected the valiant Tolius, and 500 intrepid followers, for the post of the greatest danger, and therefore placed them on his right Morcard, the lord of Brunne, and his companions in arms, he stationed with them. On the left of his array, Osgot, the illustrious sheriff, with his 500 soldiers, took his allotted post with Harding of Rehale, and the young and impetuous citizens of Stamford. Algar himself, with his seneschals, chose the centre, that they might be ready to aid either division as exigency required.

The Northmen, in the first dawn of light, buried their three kings in the spot thence called Trekyngham, and leaving two other of their royal leaders, with four jarls, to guard their camp and

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 868.

captives, they moved forwards with four kings and eight jarls, burning with fury for the disgrace of their friends on the preceding day.

THE English, from their small number, contracted themselves into a wedge; against the impetus of the Northern darts, they presented an impenetrable arch of shields, and they repelled the violence of the horse by a dense arrangement of their spears. Lessoned by their intelligent commanders, they maintained their station immovable the whole day.

EVENING advanced, and their unconquered valour had kept off enemies, whose numbers had menaced them with inevitable ruin. The Northmen had spent their darts in vain. Their horsemen were wearied with the ineffectual toil of the day; and their whole army, despairing of success, in feigned confusion withdrew. Elated at the sight of the retreating foe, the English, quitting their array, sprang forwards to complete their conquest. In vain their hoary leaders expostulated, in vain proclaimed ruin if they separated. Intoxicated with the prospect of unhoped success, they forgot that it was the skill of their commanders, which, more than their own bravery, had protected them. They forgot the fewness of their numbers, and the yet immense superiority of their foes. They saw flight, and they thought only of victory. Dispersed in their eager pursuit, they displayed to the Northern chiefs a certain means of conquest. Suddenly the Pagans rallied in every part, and rushing upon the scattered English, surrounded them on every side. It was then they saw what fatal rashness had involved in equal ruin their country and themselves. They had almost rescued

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

868.

England from destruction by their valour and conduct; and now, by a moment's folly, all their advantages were lost. For a while, Algar, the undaunted earl, and the self-devoting Tolius, with the other chiefs, discreet even in the midst of approaching ruin, by gaining a little eminence, protracted their fate. But as the dispersed English could not be re-united, as the dissolved arrangement could not be re-composed, the valour and skill of the magnanimous leaders, however exalted and unexcelled, could only serve to multiply the victims of the day. The possibility of victory had vanished. The six chiefs beheld their followers falling fast around; death approached themselves. Mounting upon the bodies of their friends, they returned blow for blow, till, fainting under innumerable wounds, they expired upon the corses of their too impetuous companions.[27]

A FEW youths of Sutton and Gedeney threw their arms into the neighbouring wood, and escaping with difficulty in the following night, they communicated the fatal catastrophe to the monastery of Croyland[28], while its abbot and the society were performing matins. The dismal tidings threw terror into every breast; all forboded that the next stroke of calamity would fall on them. The abbot, retaining with him the aged monks and a few infants, sent away the youthful and the strong, with their relics, jewels, and charters, to hide themselves in the nearest marshes, till the demons of slaughter had passed by. With anxious haste they loaded a

[27] This interesting narrative is in Ingulf, 20, 21.

[28] Croyland was one of the islands lying in that tract of the Eastern waters, which, rising from the middle of the country, and spreading above 100 miles, precipitated themselves into the sea with many great rivers. Malm. Gest. Pont. 292.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 868.

boat with their treasures. They threw their domestic property into the waters, but as part of the table of the great altar, plated with gold, rose above the waves, they drew it out, and replaced it in the abbey.

THE flames of the villages in Kesteven now gradually spread towards them, and the clamours of the fierce pagans drew nearer. Alarmed, they resumed their boat, and reached the wood of Ancarig near the south of the island.[29] Here, with Toretus, the anchorite, and his fraternity, they remained four days.

THE abbot, and they who were too young or too old to fly, put on their sacred vestments, and assembled in the choir, performing their mass and singing all the Psalter, with the faint hope, that unresisting age and harmless childhood would disarm ferocity of its cruelty. Soon a furious torrent of howling barbarians poured in, exulting to find Christian priests to massacre. The venerable abbot was hewed down at the altar by the cruel Oskitul, and the attendant ministers were beheaded after him. The old men and children, who ran affrighted from the choir, were seized and tortured, to discover the treasure of the place. The prior suffered in the vestry, the subprior in the refectory; every part of the sacred edifice was stained with blood. One child only, of ten years of age, whose beautiful countenance happened to interest the

[29] Or Thorn-ey, the island of Thorns. There was a monastery here. Malmsbury exhibits it as the picture of a paradise; amidst the marshes abounding in trees, was a fine green plain, as smooth and level as a stream; every part was cultivated; here apple-trees arose, there vines crept along the fields, or twined round poles. Yet he adds one trait so expressive of lonesomeness, as to throw a gloom over the charms of nature: "When a man comes he is applauded like an angel." De Gest. Pont. 294.

Digitized by Google

younger Sidroc[30], was permitted to survive. The spoilers broke down all the tombs and monuments, with the avaricious hope of discovering treasures; and, on the third day, they committed the superb edifice to the flames. 868.

WITH a great plunder of cattle, the insatiate barbarians marched the next day to Peterborough.[31] There stood a monastery, the glory of the architecture of the age, and whose library was a large repository of books, which the anxious labours of two centuries had collected. But arts and science were toys not worthy even to amuse their women, in the estimation of these invaders. They assailed the gates and fastenings, and with their archers and machines attacked the walls. The monks resisted with all their means of annoyance. A brother of Ubbo was carried off to his tent, wounded by the blow of a stone. This incident added a new incentive to the cruel fury of the Northmen. They burst in at the second assault under Ubbo. He slew the hoary abbot, and all the monks, with his own weapon. Every other inhabitant was slaughtered without mercy by his followers. One man only had a gleam of humanity. Sidroc cautioned the little boy, whom he had saved from Croyland, to keep out of the way of Ubbo. The immense

[30] One of the Sidrocs had already distinguished himself for his aggressions on France. In 852, and 855, he entered the Seine with much successful depredation. Chron. Fontanel. Bouquet 7. p. 40—43.

[31] This also stands in the land of the Girvii or Fenmen, who occupied those immense marshes, containing millions of acres, where the counties of Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Northampton meet. Camd. 408. The marshes are described by Hugo Candidis as furnishing wood and turf for fire, hay for cattle, reeds for thatching, and fish and water-fowl for subsistence. Peterborough monastery was in the best portion. On one side was a range of water, on the other woods and a cultivated country. It was accessible on all sides but the east, where a boat was requisite.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

868.

booty which they were gorged with did not mitigate their love of ruin. The much admired monastery, and its valuable and scarcely reparable literary treasures, were soon wrapt in fire. For fifteen days the conflagration continued.

The Northmen, turning to the south, advanced to Huntingdon. The two earls Sidroc were appointed to guard the rear and the baggage over the rivers. As they were passing the Nen[32], after the rest of the army, two cars, laden with vast wealth and property, with all the cattle drawing them, were overturned, at the left of the stone bridge, into a depthless whirlpool. While all the attendants of the younger Sidroc were employed in recovering what was possible of the loss, the child of Croyland ran into the nearest wood, and, walking all night, he beheld the smoking ruins of his monastery at the dawn.

He found that the monks had returned from Ancarig the day before, and were laboriously toiling to extinguish the flames, which yet raged in various divisions of the monastery. When they heard from the infant the fate of their superior and elder brethren, unconquerable sorrow suspended their exertions, till wearied nature compelled a remission of their grief. They collected such as they could find of the mutilated and half-consumed bodies, and buried them with sympathetic reverence. Having repaired part of the ruins, they chose another abbot; when the hermits of Ancarig came to implore their charitable care for the bodies at Peterborough, which the animals of prey were violating. A deputation of monks was sent, who found the corpses,

[32] This river runs through Northampton, making many reaches by the winding of its banks. Camden calls it a very noble river, p. 430.

Digitized by Google

and interred them in one large grave, with the abbot at the summit. A stony pyramid covered his remains, round which were afterwards engraven their images in memorial of the catastrophe. [33] 868.

SPREADING devastation and murder around them as they marched, the Northmen proceeded into Cambridgeshire. Ely and its first Christian church and monastery, with the heroic nuns, who mutilated their faces to preserve their honour, were destroyed by the ruthless enemy; and many other places were desolated.

870. Invasion of East Anglia.

THE sanguinary invaders went afterwards into East Anglia. [34] The throne of this kingdom was occupied by Edmund, a man praised for his affability, his gentleness, and humility. He may have merited all the lavish encomiums which he has received for the milder virtues; but he was deficient in those manly energies whose vigorous activity would have met the storm in its fury, and might have disarmed it of its terrors. [35]

INGWAR, separating from Ubbo, proceeded to the place where Edmund resided. The picture

[33] Ingulf, 22—24. Chron. Petrib. 18—20.

[34] Abbo Floriacensis, who wrote in the tenth century, describes East Anglia as nearly environed with waters; immense marshes, an hundred miles in extent, were on the north; the ocean on the east and south. On the west it was protected from the irruptions of the other members of the octarchy, by a mound of earth like a lofty wall. Its soil was fertile and pleasant; it was full of lakes two or three miles in space; its marshes were peopled with monks. MSS. Cott. Library. Tib. B. 2. p. 3.

[35] One of the fullest accounts of the fate of Edmund, is in the little book of Abbo. He addresses it to the famous Dunstan, from whom he had the particulars he narrates. He intimates that Dunstan used to repeat them with eyes moist with tears, and had learnt them from an old soldier of Edmund's, who simply and faithfully recounted them upon his oath to the illustrious Ethelstan. Abbo's treatise has been printed abroad in Acta Sanctorum. Cologne, vol. vi. p. 465—472. ed. 1575.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 870.

annexed to his route represents a burning country, the highways strewed with the victims of massacre, violated women, the husband expiring on his own threshold near his wife, and the infant torn from its mother's bosom, and slain before her eyes to increase her screams.[36] Ingwar had heard a favourable account of Edmund's warlike abilities, and by a rapid movement endeavoured, according to the usual plan of the Northmen[37], to surprise the king, before he could present an armed country to repel him. Edmund, though horrors had for some time been raging round his frontiers, was roused to no preparations; had meditated no warfare. He was dwelling quietly in a village near Hagilsdun[38], when the active Dane appeared near him, and he was taken completely unawares.

His earl, Ulfketul, had made one effort to save East Anglia, but it failed. His army was decisively beaten at Thetford with profuse slaughter; and this calamity deeply wounded the mind of Edmund, who did not reflect, that to resist the Danes with energy, was not merely to uphold his own domination, but to protect his people from the most fatal ruin.[39]

[36] "Maritus cum conjuge aut mortuus aut moribundus jacebat in limine: infans raptus a matris uberibus, ut major esset ejulatus, trucidabatur coram maternis obtutibus." Abbo, MSS. p. 3. This author was so well acquainted with Virgil and Horace as to cite them in his little work.

[37] Abbo remarks of the Danish nation, "cum semper studeat rapto vivere, nunquam tamen indicta pugna palam contendit cum hoste, nisi preventa insidiis, ablata spe ad portus navium remeandi." MSS. p. 6.

[38] The Hill of Eagles. It is now, says Bromton, 805, called Hoxne. It is upon the Waveney, a little river dividing part of Norfolk from Suffolk. It is not far from Diss in Norfolk. Camden names it Hoxon, p. 375.

[39] Ingulf, 24. Asser, 20. Matt. West. 318.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VI.

870.

As Ingwar drew nigh to the royal residence he sent one of his countrymen to the king, with a haughty command, to divide his treasures, submit to his religion, and reign in subjection to his will. "And who are you that should dare to withstand our power! The storm of the ocean deters not our proposed enterprise, but serves us instead of oars. Neither the loud roarings of the sky, nor its darting lightnings have ever injured us. Submit, then, with your subjects, to a master to whom even the elements are subservient."[40]

On receiving this imperious message, Edmund held counsel with one of his bishops who enjoyed his confidence. The ecclesiastic, apprehensive of the king's safety, exhorted his compliance. A dialogue ensued, in which Edmund displayed the sensibility of an amiable mind, but not those active talents which would have given safety to his people. He pitied his unhappy subjects, groaning under every evil which a barbarous enemy could inflict, and wished his death could restore them. When the bishop represented to him the ravages which the Northmen had perpetrated, and the danger which impended on himself, and advised his flight, the mild-hearted king exclaimed, "I desire not to survive my dear and faithful subjects. Why do you suggest to me the shame of abandoning my fellow-soldiers? I have always shunned the disgrace of reproach, and especially of cowardly abandoning my knights; because I feel it nobler to

[40] "Et quis tu, ut tantæ potentiæ insolenter audeas contradicere? Marinæ tempestatis procella nostris servit remigiis, nec movet a proposito directæ intentionis.—Quibus nec ingens mugitus cœli, nec crebri jactus fulminum unquam nocuerunt. Esto itaque, cum tuis omnibus, sub hoc imperatore maximo cui famulantur elementa." Abbo, ib.

Digitized by Google

BOOK VI. 870.

die for my country than to forsake it; and shall I now be a voluntary recreant, when the loss of those I loved makes even the light of heaven tedious to me?"[41] The Danish envoy was then called in, and Edmund addressed him with an energy that ought to have anticipated such a crisis, and to have influenced his actions. "Stained as you are with the blood of my people, you deserve death; but I will imitate the example of him I venerate, and not pollute my hands with your blood. Tell your commander I am neither terrified by his threats, nor deluded by his promises. Let his boundless cupidity, which no plunder can satiate, take and consume my treasures. You may destroy this frail and falling body, like a despised vessel; but know, that the freedom of my mind shall never, for an instant, bow before him. It is more honourable to defend our liberties with our lives than to beg mercy with our tears. Death is preferable to servility. Hence! my spirit shall fly to heaven from its prison, contaminated by no degrading submission. How can you allure me by the hope of retained power, as if I could desire a kingdom, where its population has been so destroyed; or a few subjects robbed of every thing that makes life valuable!"[42]

This passive fortitude, and these irritating reproaches only goaded the resentment of the Dane, whose rapid hostilities had now made active warfare useless. The king was taken without farther contest. He was bound with close fetters, and severely beaten. He was then dragged to a tree,

[41] Abbo, ibid.

[42] This is a literal translation of his speech to the messenger of Ingwar, as given by Abbo, on the authority mentioned in note 35.

Digitized by Google

tied to its trunk and lacerated with whips. Even these sufferings could not appease the tigers of the Baltic. They aimed their arrows at his body with contending dexterity. At length Ingwar, enraged at his firmness and piety, closed the cruel scene by the amputation of his head.[43] 870.

THUS terminated another kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy, which, as it had been baneful to the happiness of the island by occasioning incessant warfare, was now become wholly incompatible with the security of every individual, while the states of the continent were enlarging, and the North was pouring its throngs around. By annihilating with such total extirpation all the rival dynasties, and the prejudices which supported them, the Danes unconsciously made some atonement for the calamities they diffused. They harassed the Anglo-Saxons into national fraternity, and combined contending sceptres into one well-regulated monarchy.

THE Northmen placed Godrun, one of their kings, over East-Anglia; while the brother of Edmund, terrified at the miseries of the day, fled into Dorset, and there lived an hermetical life on bread and water.[44]

HAVING resolved to attempt the subjugation of the island, the Northmen governed their career with policy as distinguished as their cruelty. They had attacked Mercia, and they beheld the banners of West Saxony waving on its frontiers. If they assaulted Wessex, would the Mercian

[43] The 20th of November was the day of his catastrophe, which was so interesting, that the Islander, Ara Frode, makes it one of the steps of his chronology, p. 7. He was canonized. His memory was much venerated, and his name still exists in our calendars.

[44] Malmsb. 250. Bromton, 807

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 870.

sword be there? Their experience proved that they calculated well on the petty policy of that degraded kingdom. Although the crown of Mercia trembled in every battle in Wessex; though it was impossible for Ethelred to be conquered, and for Burrhed to be secure, yet the protecting succour which Mercia had received from the kings of Wessex was never returned, though common danger claimed it.

INGWAR having completed the conquest of East Anglia, and permitted his associate, Godrun, to assume its sceptre, returned to his brother Ubbo, in Northumbria.[45] The rest of the invaders, under the command of Halfden and Bacseg, two of their kings, or sea-kings, hastened from East Anglia to a direct invasion of Wessex.

Wessex attacked.

THEY penetrated from Norfolk unchecked into Berkshire; they possessed themselves of Reading as soon as they reached it, and continued there many days unmolested.

ON the third day after their arrival, their leaders, with a powerful body of cavalry, spread themselves successfully to pillage; the rest dug a trench between the Thames and the Kennet, to the right of the city, to defend their encampments. Ethelwulph, the earl of the county, who had defeated the invaders before, collected the men of the vicinity, and exhorted them to disregard the superiority of the foe. His argument was a popular one:

[45] Bromton, 807. Ethelwerd says of him, "Ivar died this year," p. 843. The Annals of Ulster state, that he went in this year from Scotland to Dublin with 200 ships, with great booty, and a multitude of English, Welsh, and Pictish prisoners. These annals place his death in 872, thus: "872, Ivar, king of all the Northerns in Ireland and Britain, died," p. 65. His children, sea-kings, like himself, are often mentioned in these Irish Annals.

Digitized by Google

"What though their army is larger than ours, Christ, our general, is stronger than them." His countrymen were convinced by his logic; and, after a long combat, the invaders were repulsed at Inglefield[46], with the loss of Sidroc the elder, the chief who had so much afflicted France. 870.

FOUR days after this conflict, the kings of Wessex, Ethelred and Alfred, put themselves into motion with their forces, and joining the earl Ethelwulph, attacked the Northmen at Reading. They destroyed all the enemies who were out of the citadel; but those within rushing from all its gates, a fiercer battle followed, which ended in the death of Ethelwulph, and the retreat of the West Saxons.[47]

TAKEN unawares by the invasion, the West Saxons had rushed to the conflict with a hasty and inadequate force. Four days afterwards, they collected in a more complete and formidable array, and combated the enemy at Æscesdun, or the Ash-tree Hill.[48] The Danes had accumulated all their strength, and, with an attempt at tactical arrangement, they divided themselves into two bodies; one, the chief, their two kings conducted; the other moved under the earls. The English imitated their array. Ethelred resolved himself to encounter the northern kings, and appointed Alfred to shock with their earls. Both armies raised their shields into a tortoise-arch, and demanded the battle.

THE Northmen were first in the field: for Ethel-

[46] Sax. Chron. 80. Sim. Dun. 125. Asser, 21. Inglefield is a little village in the neighbourhood of Reading. Camden, 142, who, in a small mistake, calls Ethelwulph a king instead of an earl.

[47] Sim. Dun. 125. Asser, 21.

[48] Asser, 21.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

870.

red, either impressed with that dispiriting belief, which men on the eve of great conflicts sometimes experience, that he should not survive it, or preparing his mind for the worst event, and for its better state, and desirous to obtain the favour of the Lord of all existing worlds, waited to say his prayers in his tent, which he declared he would not leave till the priest had finished. Alfred, more eager for the fray, and provoked by the defying presence of the enemy, was impatient at the delay; his indignant courage forgot the inferiority of the division which he commanded; he led up his troops in condensed order, and disdained to remark that the crafty Danes were waiting on an eminence for an advantageous conflict.[49] A solitary tree marked the place of combat, and round this the nations shocked with frightful clamour and equal bravery. The exertions of Alfred were unavailing, though he is stated to have attacked like the chafed boar; he had been too precipitate. The English ranks gave way, when the presence of Ethelred, with his battle, destroyed the inequality of the combatants, and re-animated the fainting spirits of his countrymen. The long and dreadful struggle at last ended in the death of the king Bacseg, of the younger[50] Sidroc, many other earls, and some thousand of the Danes,

[49] Asser says he had his account of Alfred's impetuous alacrity from those who saw it, 22. He adds the phrase "aprino more."

[50] Aeser and the printed copy of the Saxon Chronicle place the deaths of both the Sidrocs in this battle, although it had recorded the fall of one in the preceding battle. The fine MSS. of the Saxon Chronicle in the Cotton Library, Tib. B. 4. p. 30., having mentioned the death of one Sidroc at Inglefield, refers the death of the younger Sidroc only to this battle: "anð ðhep Siðpac ꝑe ȝeonȝa, anð Oꝛbeꝛn eoꝛl, anð Fꝛæna eoꝛl, anð Haꝛalð eoꝛl." This MS., though in some respects less complete than those which Dr. Gibson edited, is yet more accurate in others. It is remarkably well written, and seems very ancient.

Digitized by Google

who fled in general rout. The English chased them all night and the next day over the fields of Ashdown till they reached their fortress at[51] Reading. The slaughter of the day gave it a dismal claim to memory.[52] 870.

FOURTEEN days after this, the Danes collected strength sufficient to defeat the kings of Wessex at Basing.[53] An important accession of allies, newly arrived from the North[54], increased the terrors of this defeat, and augured new miseries to the Anglo-Saxons.

THE last invaders joined harmoniously with the preceding, because their object was the same. Within two months afterwards the princes of Wessex supported another battle with the recruited confederates at Merton[55]; but the conflict, after many changes of victory, was again unfortunate to the English. Ethelred received a wound in it, of

[51] Asser, 23, 24. Flor. Wig. 307. Sax. Chron. 81.

[52] The place of this great battle has been controverted. Aston, near Wallingford, in Berks, has good claims, because the Saxon Chronicle (as its editor observed) mentions Æscesdun, on another occasion, as close by Wallingford, p. 135. Dr. Wise, in his letter to Dr. Mead, concerning some antiquities in Berkshire, printed 1738, contends that the famous white horse on the hill was made to commemorate this victory. "He says, "I take Escesdune to mean that ridge of hills from Letcombe and thereabouts, going on to Wiltshire, and overlooking the vale with the towns in it. The town formerly called Ayshesdown, is now called Ashbury; the old name is still preserved hereabouts, the downs being called by the shepherds, Ashdown; and about a mile southward from Ashbury, is Ashdown Park," p. 20. Whitaker prefers the locality of Aston, p. 272.

[53] Asser, 24.

[54] Quo prælio peracto, de ultramarinis partibus alius paganorum exercitus societati se adjunxit. Asser, 24.

[55] Sax. Chron. 81. This position of Meretune is doubtful. Merton in Surrey, Merden in Wilts, and Merton in Oxfordshire, have been suggested. I am induced to venture a new opinion, that it was Morton in Berks, because the Chronicle of Mailros, 144, places the battle at Reading; and, according to the map, Morton hundred joins Reading, and contains both North Merton and South Merton.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

which he died soon after Easter, and was interred at Wimburn.[56]

870. Ethelred dies.

[56] Bromton, 809. The bishop of Sherborne fell in this battle. Matt. West. 323. The Saxon Chronicle says, that he and many gobpa menna fell in it, 81, whom Huntingdon calls multi proceres Angliæ, p. 349. Ethelwerd, the chronicler, in mentioning Ethelred's death, styles this king his atavus, p. 843., thus intimating his own princely ancestry.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

The Reign of ALFRED, *from his accession to his Retirement.*

CHAP. VII.

871. Alfred accedes.

THE death of Ethelred raised Alfred to the throne of Wessex. Some children of his elder brother were alive [1], but the crisis was too perilous for the nation to have suffered the sceptre to be feebly wielded by a juvenile hand. The dangers which environed the country, excited the earls and chiefs of the whole nation, whom we may understand to have been the witena-gemot, with the unanimous approbation of the country [2], to choose Alfred for the successor, that they might have a prince who could give them the protection of his abilities.

IT is intimated that he hesitated [3]; and indeed, every evil which can abate human happiness, seemed to surround the diadem offered to Alfred.

IT was the defeat and death of a brother which occasioned his accession. The victorious enemies, stronger from their victory, promised to be more formidable to Alfred than to Ethelred. All the causes that had produced their former successes were yet in full operation, while the new sove-

[1] Alfred in his will gave eight manors to Æthelm, his brother's son, and three manors to Athelwold, his brother's son. He also gave some manors to his cousin Osferth. The end of Athelwold will be seen in Edward's reign.

[2] Sim. Dun. 126, 127. Asser, 24.

[3] Asser's expression is, that he began to reign quasi invitus, as if unwillingly, because he thought that unless he was supported by the divine assistance, he could not resist such enemies. Vita Alfredi, p. 24.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

871.

reign's means of resisting them were not increased. According to the natural course of things his reign could not be but calamitous. Alfred chose to endure the threatening contingencies, and by accepting the throne, began a life of severe military labour, of continual difficulty, and of great mental anxiety, shaded for some time with the deepest gloom of misfortune and personal degradation.

THE fiercest and most destructive succession of conflicts which ever saddened a year of human existence distinguished that of Alfred's accession with peculiar misery. With their own population, the West Saxons maintained eight pitched battles against the Northmen, besides innumerable skirmishes by day and night, with which the nobles and royal officers endeavoured to check their depredations. Many thousands of the invaders fell, but new fleets of adventurers were perpetually shading the German Ocean with their armaments, who supplied the havoc caused by the West Saxon swords.[4] It was now become a conflict between the Northman nations and the Anglo-Saxons, for the conquest and occupation of England, like that of their own ancestors against the Britons, and of these against the Romans. The Northman mind had taken a full direction to a forcible settlement in England. It was no longer battles for transient plunder or personal fame. It was for lasting dominion; for the land-inheritance of the country; and for the property and liberty of every individual who possessed any.

[4] Asser, 25. Flor. Wig. 311. Hoveden, 417. The year 871 is noted as the beginning of Alfred's reign by Asser, the Saxon Chronicle, Mailros, Hoveden, Sim. Dun., and some others. But Ingulf, 25., Malmsb. 42., and Petrib. 21., place his accession in 872.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

WITHIN a month after Alfred's accession, the Danes attacked his troops at Wilton[5], in his absence, with such superiority of force, that all the valour of patriotism could not prevent defeat. This made the ninth great battle which had been fought this year in West Saxony, besides the excursions which Alfred and several of the ealdormen and the king's thægns made against the enemy, which were not numbered. Wearied himself, and the country being exhausted by these depopulating conflicts, Alfred made a peace with his enemies, and they quitted his dominions.[6]

871. Alfred's defeat, and first peace.

YET a peace, with their continuance in the island, could but be a dangerous truce, that would soon end in more dangerous hostilities; and which, in the mean time, surrendered the rest of England into their power. This soon became visible; for the invaders marched immediately, even those who were in Northumberland, to London, and, wintering there, threatened Mercia. Burrhed, its king, twice negotiated with them; but at last, disregarding all treaties, they entered Mercia, and wintered at Repton in Derbyshire, where they destroyed the celebrated monastery, the sacred mausoleum of all the Mercian kings.[7] Burrhed quitted his throne,

Northmen conquer Mercia.

874.

[5] Bromton, 809., in a mistake, puts down Walton in Sussex. But Asser, whom the other chronicles follow, says, Wilton is on the north bank of the river Guilou, from which the whole country is named, p. 25. Guilou means the meandering river.

[6] Sax. Ch. 82. Asser, 25. Ethelw. 844. It would seem that Ingwar went to Scotland and Ireland after his conquest of East Anglia; for he is noticed in the Annals of Ulster, as besieging and destroying Alcuith at Dunbarton, and proceeding afterwards to Ireland with a multitude of English, Welsh, and Pictish prisoners, where he died; as mentioned in note 45. of the preceding chapter.

[7] Monasterium que celeberrimum omnium regum Merciorum sacratissimum mausoleum funditus destruxissent. Ingulf, 26.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

874. and, leaving his people to the mercy of the invaders, went disgracefully to Rome, where he soon died, and was buried in the English school.[8]

THE Danes gave the Mercian crown to Ceolwulf, an officer of Burrhed's court; his capacity was contracted; his disposition mischievous; he swore fidelity to his foreign masters; paid them tribute, and promised to return the power they granted, whenever they required, and to be ready with his forces to co-operate with them. He plundered the poor peasantry, robbed the merchants, and oppressed the unprotected and the clergy; on the wretched monks of the destroyed abbey of Croyland he unfeelingly imposed a tax of a thousand pounds. But this pageant of tyranny displeased his masters; he was stripped of every thing, and he perished miserably.[9] With him ended for ever the Anglo-Saxon octarchy. The kingdom of Mercia never existed again. When the Danish power declined, it was associated by Alfred to Wessex[10], from which it was never afterwards separated.

ENGLAND was now become divided between two powers, the West-Saxons; and the Northmen, who had subdued all the island but Wessex.

THE invaders divided themselves into two bodies. The largest part of their army, under their three kings, Godrun, Oskitul, and Amund, marched

[8] In the church of St. Mary there. Asser, 26. Ingulf, who in general is a very valuable authority, here makes a small confusion of dates; he says, Burrhed fled in 874, while Alfred was tarrying in Etheling island. This is not correct. Alfred did not seclude himself till four years afterwards.

[9] Ingulf, 27.

[10] Ingulf, 27. He says, that from the first year of Penda, to the deposition of Ceolwulf, the Mercian throne had lasted about 230 years.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

from Repton to Cambridge, where they wintered and resided twelve months[11]; while another division of their forces proceeded to Northumbria under Halfden, to complete the conquest of this kingdom. As yet they had subdued no more of it than Deira. His calamitous invasion subjected the whole kingdom of Northumbria, and harassed the Strathcluyd Britons.[12] Scotland attempted to withstand them, but failed; and the king of Wales fled to Ireland for refuge from their attacks.[13] Halfden, having completed the conquest of Bernicia, divided it amongst his followers, and tilled and cultivated it. He perished soon afterwards in Ireland.[14]

874. and Bernicia.

THE three kings, who had wintered at Cambridge, began their hostilities against Wessex. Leaving their positions at night, they sailed to Dorsetshire, surprised the castle of Wareham, and depopulated the country round. Alfred, after a naval victory, weary of battles and seeking only repose, again negotiated with them to leave his dominions; and he had the impolicy to use money as his peace-maker.[15] They pledged themselves by their bracelets, the oath most sacred to their feelings, and which they had never plighted be-

876. They attack Alfred. His second peace.

[11] Ethelwerd, 844. Asser, 27.

[12] Sax. Chron. 83.

[13] Ann. Ulster, 65. These annals notice some dissensions of the Northmen, in which Halfden killed by stratagem the son of Olaf, one of the kings, or sea-kings, that accompanied Ingwar.

[14] Sax. Chron. 84. In 876, the Annals of Ulster place the death of Halfden. "Battle at Lochraun, between the Fingâls and Dubhgâls, where the latter lost Halfden their captain," p. 65.

[15] Ethelwerd, 844. Before this treaty Alfred attacked the Danes by sea. His ships, meeting six of theirs, took one and dispersed the others, Asser, 27.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

876. fore.[16] But Alfred exacted also an oath on Christian relics. We may smile at the logic of the king, who thought that a Christian oath would impose a stronger obligation on Pagan minds, or that the crime of perjury was aggravated by the formalities of the adjuration. But the delusion of his mind in not discerning that the welfare of himself and his country was sacrificed by such treaties is more remarkable; especially as Asser mentions that his natural character was to be too warlike.[17]

To punish Northmen by the impositions of oaths, or by hostages, which appear to have been reciprocal[18], was to encourage their depredations by the impunity which attended them. It was binding a giant with a rush, an eagle with a cobweb. Accordingly, in a night quickly succeeding the peace-making solemnity, they rushed clandestinely on the king's forces, and slew all his horsemen.[19] They used the steeds to mount a part of their army, which rode immediately to Exeter, and remained there for the winter.[20]

877. Alfred's naval successes.

THE small advantage which the ships of Alfred had obtained over a few Danish vessels, induced him to cause long ships and galleys to be built at

[16] Asser, 28. Their bracelets were highly valued by them, and always buried with them. See Bartholin. 499—503. Joannes Tinmouth says, they were nobilitatis indicium. Hist. MSS. cited by Dugdale, i. p. 256.; and see Aimon, p. 371. 385.

[17] "Nimium bellicosus," p. 24.

[18] I infer this, because, in mentioning Alfred's complete and final conquest of Guthrun, Asser says, he exacted hostages, but gave none. Ille nullum eis daret, p. 34. He adds that this was unusual. Ita tamen qualiter nunquam cum aliquo pacem ante pepigerant.

[19] Asser, 28.

[20] Named by the Britons, Caer Wisc; by the Saxons, Eaxanceaster. It is, continues Asser, on the eastern bank of the river Wisc, near the southern sea, which flows between Gaul and Britain.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VII.

877.

the ports of his kingdom; and, as his countrymen were less competent to navigate them, he manned them with such piratical foreigners as would engage in his service.[21] They were appointed to cut off all supplies from his invaders. They met a large fleet of Northmen hastening from Wareham, to relieve their countrymen. They flew to arms with the same alacrity with which they prosecuted all their enterprises. The Northmen, half ruined already by a stormy voyage, waged a fruitless battle; their hosts perished, and of their steeds of the ocean, to adopt their favourite metaphor, one hundred and twenty were destroyed at the rock of Swanwick, on the coast of Hampshire.[22]

ALFRED at last collected his troops, and marched against the Danes in Exeter; but they possessed themselves of the castle before he reached it, and his military skill was unable or unwilling to assault or to beseige it. He contented himself with repeating the illusory policy of exacting new hostages and new oaths, that they should depart from his kingdom.[23]

THE conduct of Alfred, in the first years of his reign, seems to have been imprudent. While acting with his brother, he was energetic and indefatigable; but after he became possessed of the crown himself, instead of a system of vigilance and vigour against his enemies, we find nothing but inert

[21] Asser's expressions are "Impositis que piratis in illis vias maris custodiendas commisit." p. 29.

[22] The printed copy of Asser, besides this defeat, makes 120 also to perish in a storm. I follow Matt. West. 328., who consolidates the two incidents into one. Flor. Wig. 315., Sax. Ch. 83., Ethelw. 845., and Hunt. 350., mention only one loss of 120 vessels.

[23] Asser, 28.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

877. quietude, temporising pacifications, and transient armaments. The only plan discernible in the first seven years of his reign, was to gain momentary repose. An interval of tranquillity was certainly obtained; but it was a delusive slumber on the precipice of fate.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

Alfred becomes a Fugitive. — Misconduct imputed to him.

CHAP. VIII.

We now approach the period of Alfred's greatest degradation. The locusts of the Baltic, to use the expressive metaphor of the chronicles, having spread themselves over part of Mercia in the preceding August, and being joined by new swarms, advanced again into Wessex; and in January took possession of Chippenham in Wiltshire, where they passed the winter, and from which they made excursive ravages over the adjacent country. On this decisive invasion, the country found itself so unprotected, from whatever cause, that many of the inhabitants emigrated in penury and terror to other regions. Some fled over sea, and to France; the rest, overawed by the cavalry of the invaders, submitted to their dominion, and Alfred himself was compelled to become a fugitive.[1]

878. Northmen enter Wilts.

These circumstances, which every chronicle states or implies, are so extraordinary, that it is difficut to comprehend them. The Danes invade Wessex, the country falls, undefended into their hands, and Alfred preserves his life by such a concealment, that his friends were as ignorant as his enemies both of his residence and fate.[2] Such

Alfred's flight.

[1] Asser, 30. Sax. Chron. 84. Ethelw. 845. Matt. West. 329. Hunt. 350. Asserii Annales, 166. Alur. Bev. 105. Walling. 537. and others.

[2] Quare ergo idem sæpedictus Ælfredus in tantam miseriam sæpius incidit ut nemo subjectorum suorum sciret, ubi esset vel quo devenisset. Asser, 32. So Asserii Annales, 166. So Flor. Wig.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

became his distress, that he knew not where to turn[3]; such was his poverty, that he had even no subsistence but that which by furtive or open plunder he could extort, not merely from the Danes, but even from those of his subjects who submitted to their government; or by fishing and hunting obtain.[4] He wandered about in woods and marshes in the greatest penury, with a few companions; sometimes, for greater secresy, alone.[5] He had neither territory, nor, for a time, the hope of regaining any.[6]

To find Alfred and the country in this distress, and at the same time to remark, that no battles are mentioned to have occurred between the arrival of the Northmen at Chippenham, and the flight of the king, or the subjection of the country, are circumstances peculiarly perplexing. It is not stated on this invasion, as it is on every other, that Alfred collected an army, and resisted the Northmen; that he retired at the head of his forces, though defeated; that he posted himself in any fortress[7], or that he took any measures to defend the country against its enemies. They invade in January; and between that month and the follow-

[3] At rex Ælfredus tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, quid ageret, quo se verteret ignorabat. Matt. West. 329.

[4] Nihil enim habebat quo uteretur, nisi quod a paganis et etiam a Christianis qui se paganorum subdiderant dominio, frequentibus irruptionibus aut clam, aut etiam palam subtraheret. Asser, 30. Flor. Wig.

[5] Asser, 30. Hunt. 350. Mailros, 144. Chron. Sax. 84. Matt. West. 329. Sim. Dun. 18. 71.

[6] Alur. Bev. 105.

[7] This was remarkable, because Odun's defence in Kynwith, and Alfred's subsequent fortification in Ethelingey, show how such a retreat would have protected the country. Hoveden says, that his ministers retired to Kynwith, p. 417.

Digitized by Google

ing Easter, a very short period, all this disaster occurred. CHAP. VIII. 878.

THE power of the Danes may have been formidable, but it had never been found by Alfred to be irresistible; and the events of a few months proved that it was easily assailable. When they attacked his brother, they met a resistance which has been recorded. When they attacked himself in the preceding years, his means of opposition, though not vigorous, are yet noticed. But on this invasion, a most remarkable silence occurs as to any measures of defence. As far as we can penetrate into such an obscured incident, we can discern none; nothing appears but panic and disaffection in the people; inactivity and distress in the king.

To suppose that the Northmen surprised him by a rapid movement into Wessex is no diminution of the difficulty, because they had been eight years in the island, moving about as they pleased; and often with celerity, for the purpose of easier victory. Rapidity of motion, was, indeed, a part of their usual tactics, both in England and in France; and not to have prepared against an event that was always possible, and always impending over him, impeaches both the judgment and patriotism of the king at this period of peril.

BEFORE Alfred, from a respected sovereign, would have become a miserable fugitive, we should expect to read of many previous battles; of much patriotic exertion, corresponding with his character and dignity, and the duties of his station; and worthy of his intellect. If defeated in one county, we should look for him in another; always

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

with an army, or in a fortress; always withstanding the fierce enemies who assaulted him.

878. Its cause investigated.

WHAT overwhelmed Alfred with such distress? What drove him so easily from his throne? It could not be, as Sir John Spelman intimates, that the Saxons "were before quite spent and done." because it is not true, that in 876 they fought "seven desperate battles."[8] These battles have been placed in this year hitherto erroneously. On comparing every reputable chronicler with Asser, the friend of the king, we find them to have occurred in the last year of Ethelred's reign, and the first of Alfred's. Since that period, though the king sometimes headed armies, no sanguinary conflict is mentioned to have ensued in Wessex. Seven years had now elapsed without one important struggle; the strength of West Saxony was therefore unimpaired, because one third of the juvenile population, at Alfred's accession, would, in 878, have attained the age of courageous manhood.

THAT the arrival of new supplies from the Baltic, could not have "broken the spirits of the Saxons" so suddenly, and have "reduced them to despair," is probable, because the West Saxons had not, for the last seven years, "undergone a miserable havoc in their persons and property," and had exerted no "vigorous actions in their own defence." So far from being reduced to the necessity of despair, we shall find that a single summons from their king, when he had recovered his self-possession, and resolved to be the heroic patriot, was sufficient to bring them eagerly into the field, though the

[8] See his plain but learned and useful life of Alfred, p. 53. and 50. Hume has copied his misconception.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

878.

undisputed occupation of the country for some months must have rendered the collection of an adequate force more difficult, and its hostilities far less availing than before. The king, is not stated to have troubled them with exhortations, to defend "their prince, their country, and their liberties[9]," before he retired. And it is remarkable, that the foes whom he had left at Chippenham, he found near Westbury, when he made the effort which produced his restoration. Amid all the confusion, emigration, and dismay, which his seclusion must have produced, twenty miles composed the extent of their intermediate progress. The invaders, whose conquests, when unresisted, were so circumscribed, and whose triumphs were afterwards destroyed by one well directed effort, could not have exhibited that gigantic port, which intimidates strength into imbecility, and ensures destruction, by annihilating the spirit that might avert it.

Misconduct imputed to Alfred.

To understand this obscure incident, it is necessary to notice some charges of misconduct which have been made against Alfred. The improprieties alluded to, are declared to have had political consequences, and have been connected with his mysterious seclusion. It may be most impartial to review the traditional imputations in all their extent, and then to consider, from the confessions of Asser, how much it is reasonable to believe, or to reject.[10]

[9] This is our Hume's mistaken statement, p. 79, 80.

[10] It would be absurd for me to offer any apology for having ventured to be the first writer in our history that has called the public attention to the faults of Alfred, whose life had been made one continued stream of panegyric. History is only valuable in proportion to its truth, and it is no injustice to any great characters to remark, with due candour, those imperfections which they allowed themselves to commit. Yet Dr. Whitaker accuses of falsehood those who state

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

An ancient life of Saint Neot, a kinsman of Alfred, exists in Saxon[11] which alludes, though vaguely, to some impropriety in the king's conduct. It says, that Neot chided him with many words, and spoke to him prophetically: "O king, much shalt thou suffer in this life; hereafter so much distress thou shalt abide, that no man's tongue may say it all. Now, loved child, hear me if thou will, and turn thy heart to my counsel. Depart entirely from thine unrighteousness, and thy sins with alms redeem, and with tears abolish."[12]

Another ancient MS. life of Saint Neot[13] is somewhat stronger in its expressions of reproach. It states, "that Neot, reproving his bad actions, commanded him to amend; that Alfred, not having wholly followed the rule of reigning justly, pursued

that Alfred had any defects. A few strokes of his pen demolish authorities as easily as he sometimes unduly stretches them. See his St. Neot, p. 141.

[11] It is in MS. in the Cotton Library, Vespasian, D. 14., intituled "Vita Sancti Neoti Saxonice." It follows an account of Furseus, an East-Anglian Saint, and some religious essays of Elfric, all in Saxon. As Elfric wrote the lives of many saints in Saxon, it is most probably his composition.

[12] After mentioning that Alfred came to Neot, emb hiſ ſaþle þeaneſe, it adds, he hine eac þhæabe maneza þonþen, anþ him to cþ' miþ ſone ſiꝛeȝunȝe. "Ꞓala þu kinȝ, mẏcel ſcealt þu þoliȝen on þẏſſen liſe, on þan toþeanþen time ſþa micele anȝſumnẏſſe þu ȝebiþen ſcealt þa nan mænniſc tunȝe hit eall aſecȝen ne mæiȝ. Nu leoſ beaſn ȝehoſ me ȝẏſ þu þẏlt anþ þine heoſte to mine þebe ȝeceſþe. Leþit eallinȝe ſiam þinſa unſichtþiſnẏſſe, anþ þine ſẏnnen miþ ælmeſſen aleſ et miþ teaſen aþiȝole." MSS. Vesp. p. 145. From Asser's expressions, (ut in Vita Sancti patris Neoti legitur,) p. 30., it seems that a life of Neot had been written before Asser died. The Saxon life above quoted seems to be an epitome of some more ancient one. In this manner Elfric epitomised Abbo's life. See MSS. Julius, E. 7.

[13] This is a MS. in the Cotton Library, Claudius, A. 5. It is in Latin, and is intituled "Vita Sancti Neoti per Will. Abbatem Croylandensem, an. 1180."

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII.

878.

the way of depravity[14]: that one day when the king came, Neot sharply reproached him for the wickedness of his tyranny, and the proud austerity of his government." It declares that Neot foresaw and foretold his misfortunes. "Why do you glory in your misconduct? Why are you powerful but in iniquity? you have been exalted, but you shall not continue; you shall be bruised like the ears of wheat. Where then will be your pride? If that is not yet excluded from you, it soon shall be. You shall be deprived of that very sovereignty, of whose vain splendour you are so extravagantly arrogant."[15][16]

It is in full conformity with these two lives of Neot that those others written by Ramsay in the twelfth century[16] express also inculpations of Alfred. The life composed in prose states that Neot chided him severely for his iniquitous conduct. "You shall be deprived of that kingdom in which you are swelling; in which you are so

[14] Pravos etiam ejus redarguens actus jussit in melius converti — nondum ad plenum recte reguandi normam assecutus, viam deserverat pravitatis. Claud. MS. 154.

[15] Quadam denique die solemni venientem ex more de tirannidis improbitate et de superba regiminis austeritate acriter eum increpavit Neotus. — Apponebat ei sanctum David — regum mansuetissimum et omnibus humilitatis exemplar — afferebat et Saulem superbia reprobatum. — Spiritu attactus prophetico, futura ei prædixit infortunia. "Quid gloriaris," inquit, "in malitia? Quid potens es in iniquitate, elevatus es ad modicum et non subsistes et sicut summitates spicarum conteris. Ubi est gloriatio tua? at si nondum exclusa est, aliquando tamen excludetur. Ipso enim regiminis principatu cujus inani gloriatione te ipsum excedendo superbis, in proximo privaberis, &c." MS. Claud. p. 154.

[16] Dr. Whitaker has printed these from two MSS. at Oxford, one at the Bodleian, the other in Magdalen College, in the Appendix to his St. Neot. He thought them the oldest lives of St. Neot now known. The two which I have already quoted are, however, more ancient, especially the Saxon, which preceded the Norman conquest.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 878.

violently exercising an immoderate tyranny. But if you withdraw yourself from your cruel vices and inordinate passions, you shall find mercy."[17]

THE same author's biography, in Latin verse, reproaches the king's conduct as "dissolute, cruel, proud, and severe." It adds, that the king promised to correct himself, but did not; but only added to his misdeeds, and became worse. That Neot again reproved him for "wandering in depraved manners," and announced his impending calamities.[18]

THE same ideas are repeated in the fourteenth century by Matthew of Westminster in his history, in phrases like those of Ramsay[19]; and John of Tinmouth, about the same period, reiterates the charge in the language of the Claudius MS.[20] Another writer of a chronicle, Wallingford, asserts that Alfred, in the beginning of his reign, indulged in luxury and vice; and that the amendment of his conduct was a consequence of his adversity.[21]

WITH these statements from later authorities in our recollection, let us turn to the contemporary evidence of Asser, the confidential friend as well as the biographer of Alfred, and who declares so repeatedly in his history that he wrote from the information of living eye-witnesses. He loved his

[17] Whit. App. p. 347. [18] Ibid. p. 348.

[19] See Matt. West. p. 330. From the correspondence of his words, he must have had Ramsay's prose life before him when he wrote.

[20] From the very damaged MS. of Tinmouth's history in the British Museum, Tiberius, b. 1., Dr. Whitaker has printed the part which relates to St. Neot. App. 366. There is a fine complete MS. of Tinmouth in the Lambeth library, which I have inspected. As I have found, on comparing them, Matthew of Westminster to have copied Ramsay, so I perceive Tinmouth has extracted passages from the older life which I have quoted in notes 14 and 15.

[21] Wallingford, Chron. 3 Gale, p. 535, 536.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII. 878.

royal master, and we cannot read his artless biography of him without perceiving that it is not likely he would have overstated his faults, or have even mentioned them, if they had not been then too well known to have been omitted by an honest writer.

Two words used by Asser are sufficient to remove all doubt on the existence of some great faults in Alfred, in the first part of his reign; and his continuing expressions will assist us in comprehending what they were. Asser says, "We believe that this adversity occurred to the king NOT UNDESERVEDLY."[22] This emphatic admission is followed by these sentences:—

"BECAUSE, in the first part of his reign, when he was a young man, and governed by a youthful mind; when the men of his kingdom and his subjects came to him and besought his aid in their necessities; when they who were depressed by the powerful, implored his aid and patronage; he would not hear them, nor afford them any assistance, but treated them as of no estimation."[23]

ASSER continues to state, that "Saint Neot, who was then living, his relation, deeply lamented this, and foretold that the greatest adversity would befall him. But Alfred paid no attention to his admonitions, and treated the prediction with disdain."[24]

[22] Quam siquidem adversitatem præfato regi illatum *non immerito* ei evenisse credimus. Asser, p. 31.

[23] Quia in primo tempore regni sui, cum adhuc juvenis erat, animo que juvenili detentus fuerat, homines sui regni sibique subjecti, qui ad eum venerant, et pro necessitatibus suis eum requisierant, et qui depressi potestatibus erant, suum auxilium ac patrocinium implorabant; ille vero *noluit eos audire*, nec aliquod auxilium impendebat, sed *omnino eos nihili pendebat*, p. 31.

[24] Quod beatissimus vir Neotus adhuc vivens in carne qui erat cognatus suus intime corde doluit; maximamque adversitatem ab hoc ei

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 878.

THE guarded expressions of the bishop, writing to his living sovereign, whom he highly venerated, prevent us from deciphering more clearly the exact nature of Alfred's offence. As far as he goes, however, he gives some confirmation to the traditions which have been quoted. He confesses some misconduct in the discharge of the king's royal functions. And, as he adds, that Alfred's punishment was so severe in this world, that his insipientia, his folly, might not be chastised hereafter [25], we may presume that the fault was of magnitude, though he has not more clearly explained it.

THE prophetic spirit of Neot could be nothing but his sagacity. The king's neglect of the complaints and sufferings of his subjects may have made him unpopular, and Neot may have foreseen the calamities which would result from the displeasure of the people. The activity and power of the Danes could not be resisted with success, without the highest zeal and alacrity of the Saxon people. But if Alfred, by treating their grievances with contempt, had alienated their affections, the strongest fortress of his throne was sapped.

The probable cause.

IN considering this subject, we must, in justice to Alfred, remember that all his errors were confined to the first part of his reign, and were nobly amended. It is also fair to state, that the imputed neglect of his people must not be hastily attributed

venturam spiritu prophetico plenus prædixerat. Sed ille et piissimam viri Dei correptionem parvi pendebat et verissimam ejus prophetiam non recipiebat. Asser, 31-2.

[25] Quia igitur quicquid ad homine peccatur aut hic aut in futuro necesse est ut quolibet modo puniatur; noluit verus et pius judex illam regis insipientiam esse impunitam in hoc seculo; quatenus illi parceret in districto judicio. Asser, 32.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. VIII. 878.

to a tyrannical disposition, because it may be referred to circumstances which better suit his authentic character. It may have arisen from the intellectual disparity between himself and his people. When men begin to acquire knowlege, they sometimes encourage a haughty self-opinion, a craving fondness for their favourite pursuit, and an irritable impatience of every interruption. This hurtful temper, which disappears as the judgment matures, may have accompanied Alfred's first acquisitions of knowledge; and such feelings could only be exasperated, when the duties of his office called him from his studies and meditations into a world of barbarians, who despised books and bookmen; with whom his mind could have no point of contact; whose ignorance provoked his contempt, and whose habits, perhaps, excited his abhorrence. Beginning to meditate, in his private hours, on the illustrious ancients whom he had heard of, his mind aspired to be assimilated to theirs, and could only loathe the rude, martial, and ignorant savages who filled his court, claimed his time, and oppressed his kingdom. Dependent and noble were alike fierce, uninstructed, and gross. How could his emerging mind compare the exalted characters and depictured civilization of Greece and Rome, or the sweet and interesting virtues inculcated by Christianity, without an indignation, impatience, and misanthropy which call for our compassion rather than our reproach! How could he have imbibed an ardent intellectual taste, and have thereby possessed the increasing love of the great, the beautiful, and the good, without being affected by the melancholy contrast between his studies and his experience! Every one who has struggled into

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

taste and knowlege amid the impediments of uncongenial connections and occupations, will have felt, in his own experience, something of that temper of mind which, in circumstances somewhat analogous, seems at first to have actuated Alfred.

Alfred deserted by his subjects.

ASSER connects with the hints about his faults, an intimation, that, in this important crisis of his life, he suffered from the disaffection of his subjects. It is expressed obscurely, but the words are of strong import. He says, "the Lord permitted him to be very often wearied by his enemies, afflicted by adversity, and to be depressed *by the contempt of his people.*"[26] He adds to these phrases, the paragraphs already quoted about his faults, and ends the subject by declaring, "*Wherefore* he fell often into such misery, that none of his subjects knew where he was, or what had befallen him."[27]

ASSER had already declared, that on the invasion of Godrun, many fled into exile; and that "for the greatest part, all the inhabitants of that region submitted to his[28] dominion." The inference which seems naturally to result from all his passages is, that Alfred had offended his people, and in this trying emergency was deserted by them. Other authors also declare, that it was their flight or disaffection which produced his.[29]

[26] Verum etiam ab hostibus fatigari, adversitatibus affligi, *despectu suorum deprimi*, multotiens eum idem benignus dominus permisit, p. 31.

[27] Quare ergo idem sæpedictus Ælfredus in tantam miseriam sæpius incidit, ut nemo subjectorum suorum sciret, ubi esset vel quo devenisset, p. 32.

[28] Asser, p. 30.

[29] The Chronicle of Mailros says, that Alfred *fugientibus suis* cum paucis relictus est et in nemoribus se abscondebat, p. 144. Wallingford says, Rex vero Ealfredus elegit prophetiæ spiritui cedere quam cum

Digitized by Google

A FEW other remarks on this subject may be perused in the accompanying note.[80]

certo suorum dissidio sævientibus occursare. Ingulf declares, that ad tantam tandem exilitatem deductus est ut tribus pagis Hamtoniensi, Wiltoniensi, et Somersata *ægre in fide* retentis, p. 26. So Malmsbury, p. 43.

The Latin life of St. Neot says, Rex autem Aluredus audiens barbaricam rabiem atque sævitiam cominus iruisse *suorumque considerans dispersionem* huc illucque cœpit animo fluctuare. MSS. Claud. 157. The expression of Asser, in note 32. of *Sæpius*, would lead us to infer that Alfred had been in great difficulties *before* this last distress.

[80] We have endeavoured to account for the neglect of his subjects mentioned by Asser; but he is also charged with cruelty and severity, and with immoral conduct, in the ancient lives of St. Neot.

On the last imputation we may observe, that Alfred in his youth felt himself subject to tendencies which induced him to implore from Heaven some disciplining visitation to repress them, that would not make him useless or contemptible among his contemporaries. Asser, p. 41. The accusation of cruelty and severity is more remarkable. On this we may recollect some of his judicial punishments which are mentioned in the old law-book called the "Mirroir des Justices," written by Andrew Horne in the reign of Edward the Second. He quotes in this work, Rolls in the time of king Alfred, and, among many other inflictions of the king's love of justice, he mentions several executions which appear to have been both summary and arbitrary, and, according to our present notions, cruelly severe. It is true that the minds and habits of every part of society were in those times so violent, that our estimation of the propriety of these judicial severities cannot now be accurately just. But yet, even with this recollection, the capital punishments with which Alfred is stated to have visited the judicial errors, corruptions, incapacity, dishonesty, and violence, which are recorded in the Mirror, strike our moral feeling as coming within the expressions of the "immoderate tyranny" which he is said to have at first exhibited.

That Alfred should desire the improvement of his people, was the natural result of his own improving mind. But if he at first attempted to effect this by violence; and to precipitate, by pitiless exertions of power, that melioration which time, and adapted education, laws, example, and institutions, only could produce, he acted with as much real tyranny as if he had shed their blood from the common passions of ordinary despots; but his motives must not be confounded with theirs. He meant well, though he may have acted, in this respect, injudiciously.

Yet no motive can make crime not criminal. However men may palter with the question to serve temporary purposes, no end justifies bad means. Cruelty and violence are always evils, and tend to pro-

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

duce greater ones than those which they correct. We may, therefore, understand from the examples mentioned by Horne, that even Alfred's better purposes, thus executed, may have attached to the beginning of his reign the charges of tyranny and cruelty, and may have produced the temporary aversion of his people. They could not appreciate his great objects. They saw what they hated. They probably misconceived, for a time, his real character, and by their alienation may have contributed to amend it. Virtue, without intending it, will often act viciously from ignorance, prejudice, wrong advice, or undue alarm. Wisdom must unite with virtue to keep it from wrong conduct or deterioration; but true wisdom arises from the best human and divine tuition, and the gradual concurrence of experience. Alfred possessed these in the latter part of his life, but in its earlier periods had not attained them.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

His Conduct during his Seclusion.

CHAP. IX. 878.

LET us now collect all that the most ancient writers have transmitted to us of this afflictive crisis of Alfred's life. Their statements present us with all that was known or believed on this subject, by our ancestors who lived nearest to the times of our venerable king; and they are too interesting not to merit our careful preservation.

THE period of Alfred's humiliation may be divided into four stages. 1st. What occurred between his leaving his throne and his reaching Athelney: 2d. The incidents which happened to him there before he began his active measures against the invaders: 3d. His exertions until he discovered himself again to his subjects: and 4th. The great battle which restored him to his kingdom. On each of these heads we will lay before the reader the circumstances which the best and most ancient authorities that we could explore have transmitted to us.

ON the first stage, the oldest authority that now remains is the Saxon life of St. Neot, written before the Conquest. He says of the king, that when the army approached "he was soon lost; he took flight, and left all his warriors, and his commanders, and all his people, his treasures and his treasure vessels, and preserved his life. He went hiding over hedges and ways, woods and wilds, till

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

through the divine guidance he came safe to the isle of Æthelney."[1]

The life of St. Neot was first written in Alfred's time, and is quoted by his friend Asser.[2] This primitive tract of Neot's biography is not now to be found; but we may reasonably suppose that the ancient lives of this saint which have survived to us were composed from it.

The next work in point of antiquity is the MS. Latin life of the same person in the Cotton Library, ascribed by the title of the MS. to an Abbot of Croyland in 1180. It says:—

"The king hearing that the rage and cruelty of the barbarians were rushing immediately upon him, and considering the dispersion of his people, began to fluctuate to and fro in his mind. At length yielding to his discreeter judgment, he retired from his enemies alone and unarmed, and exposed to be the sport of flight. As he was entirely ignorant whither he should turn himself, or where the necessity of his flight should impel him, he let fortune lead him, and came unexpectedly into a place surrounded on all sides with extensive marshes. This place was in the extreme boundary of England, on the borders of Britain, which, in their language, is called Ethelingaia, and in ours (Latin) means the royal island."[3]

The fuller account of Matthew of Westminster

[1] Tha ꝑe hepe ꝑꝑa ꝑtiþlic pæꝼ, anb ꝑꝑa neh Engleland, he ꝑone ꝑoꝼþýꝼht, ꝼleameꝼ ceꝑte, hiꝼ cempen ealle ꝑoꝼlet anb hiꝼ hepetogen anb eall hiꝼ theobe, mabmeꝼ anb mabmꝼaten anb hiꝼ liꝼe gebeaꝼh. Feꝼbe tha lutigenbe geonb hegeꝼ anb þegeꝼ, geonb þubeꝼ anb þelbeꝼ ꝑꝑa tha he thuꝼh Lobeꝼ piꝼꝼunge geꝼunb become to Ætheling-ege. MSS. British Museum, Vespas. D. 14.

[2] Ut in vita sancti patris Neoti legitur. Asser, p. 30.

[3] MSS. Claud. A. 5.

Digitized by Google

seems to be taken chiefly from Ramsay's Life of St. Neot, written within half a century after the preceding. CHAP. IX. 878.

"In the extreme borders of the English people towards the west, there is a place called Æthelingeie, or the isle of the nobles. It is surrounded by marshes, and so inaccessible that no one can get to it but by a small vessel. It has a great wood of alders, which contains stags and goats, and many animals of that kind. Its solid earth is scarcely two acres in breadth. Alfred having left the few fellow-soldiers whom he had, that he might be concealed from his enemies, sought this place alone, where, seeing the hut of an unknown person, he turned to it, asked and received a shelter. For some days, he remained there as a guest and in poverty, and contented with the fewest necessaries. But the king, being asked who he was and what he sought in such a desert place, answered that he was one of the king's thegns, had been conquered with him in a battle, and flying from his enemies had reached that place. The herdsman believing his words, and moved with pity, carefully supplied him with the necessaries of life."[4]

Alfred's adventures in Ethelney.

His first incident is thus described by his friend Asser, with an allusion to a contemporary life of Neot not now extant.

"He led an unquiet life there, at his cowherd's. It happened that on a certain day the rustic wife of this man prepared to bake her bread. The king, sitting then near the hearth, was making ready his bow and arrows, and other warlike instruments, when the ill-tempered woman beheld the loaves

[4] Matt. West. p. 329, 330.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

burning at the fire. She ran hastily and removed them, scolding the king, and exclaiming, 'You man! you will not turn the bread you see burning, but you will be very glad to eat it when done.' This unlucky woman little thought she was addressing the king, Alfred."[5]

THE same event is told in the Saxon life thus: —

"HE took shelter in a swain's house, and also him and his evil wife diligently served. It happened that on one day the swain's wife heated her oven, and the king sat by it warming himself by the fire. She knew not then that he was the king. Then the evil woman was excited, and spoke to the king with an angry mind: 'Turn thou those loaves, that they burn not; for I see daily that thou art a great eater.' He soon obeyed this evil woman, because she would scold. He then, the good king, with great anxiety and sighing, called to his Lord imploring his pity."[6]

[5] Asser, p. 30, 31. Although in the Cotton MSS. of Asser this passage is wanting, yet it was in Camden's ancient MSS., and the preceding words, "apud quandum suum vaccarium" are in the Cotton MS. Dr. Whitaker, in his usual hasty manner, boldly calls it an interpolation taken from Ramsay's Life of St. Neot, which he has printed. But Dr. W. did not know of the earlier life in the Claud. MS., nor of the still more ancient Saxon life, Vesp. D. 14., both of which contain the incident. Malmsbury also mentions the "in silvam profugus," and the subsequent education of the herdsman for the church, and his elevation to the see of Winchester, p. 242.

[6] Anð on ſumeſ ſpaneſ huſe hiſ hleop ȝeþnðe anð eac ſþýlce hım anð hiſ ýþele piſe ȝeopne heþðe. Þiꝛ ȝelamp ſume ðeiȝe ꝛha ꝛhæſ ſpaneſ piſ hæꝛꝛe heþe open anð þe kinȝ ꝛhoþ biȝ ſæꝛ hleoppinðe hine beo ꝛhan ſýþe. Than heo þeþ nýꝛen ꝛhe he kinȝ þeþe. Tha þeaꝛh ꝛha ýþele piſ þæþinȝe aꝛꝛýneð anð cþæꝛh ꝛo ꝛhan kinȝe eoþþe moðe "Wenð ꝛhu ꝛha hlaſeſ, ꝛha heo ne ſoþðeoþneþ: ſoþþam ic ȝeſeo ðeiȝhamlice ꝛha ꝛhu mýcel æꝛe eaꝛꝛ." Þe þæſ ſone ȝelheþſum ꝛhan ýþele piſe. Foþþan ꝛhe heo neðe ſcolðe. Þe ꝛha, þe ȝoðe kinȝ, mið mýcelne anȝſumnýſſe anð ſiccenunȝe ꝛo hiſ Ðþihꝛen clýþoðe, hiſ milðſe biððenðe. MSS. Vesp. D. 14.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

878.

THE Latin life gives a little more detail.

"ALFRED, a fugitive, and exiled from his people, came by chance and entered the house of a poor herdsman, and there remained some days concealed, poor and unknown.

"It happened that on the Sabbath day, the herdsman as usual led his cattle to their accustomed pastures, and the king remained alone in the cottage with the man's wife. She, as necessity required, placed a few loaves, which some call loudas, on a pan with fire underneath, to be baked for her husband's repast and her own on his return.

"WHILE she was necessarily busied like peasants on other affairs, she went anxious to the fire and found the bread burning on the other side. She immediately assailed the king with reproaches: 'Why, man! do you sit thinking there, and are too proud to turn the bread? Whatever be your family, with such manners and sloth, what trust can be put in you hereafter? If you were even a nobleman, you will be glad to eat the bread which you neglect to attend to.' The king, though stung by her upbraidings, yet heard her with patience and mildness; and roused by her scolding, took care to bake her bread as she wished."[7]

MATTHEW of Westminster's statement of the same circumstance is to the same effect. "It happened that the herdsman, one day, as usual, led his swine to their accustomed pasture, and the king remained at home alone with the wife. She placed her bread under the ashes of the fire to bake, and was employed in other business, when she saw the loaves burning, and said to the king in her rage, 'You will not turn the bread you see burning, though

[7] MSS. Claud, A. 5. p. 157.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

you will be very glad to eat it when done.' The king, with a submitting countenance, though vexed at her upbraidings, not only turned the bread, but gave them to the woman well baked and unbroken."[8]

His munificence to the peasant.

It is stated, that he afterwards munificently rewarded the peasant, whose name was Denulf. He observed him to be a man of capacity; he recommended him to apply to letters, and to assume the ecclesiastical profession. He afterwards made him bishop of Winchester.[9]

The homely taunts of this angry rustic must have sounded harshly to the yet haughty king; but he was now levelled to her condition, or rather he was even more destitute than herself; for he was dependent on the bounty of her poverty, and had no asylum but in her humble cottage. All the honours and all the pleasures of his life had vanished like a dream: self-reproach, if he had only suffered himself to be surprised, and more poignant feelings, if his personal misconduct had driven his subjects to desert him in the hour of need, concurred to aggravate his distress. In the solitude of his retreat, and amid its penury and mortifications, it was natural that he should be pensive and melancholy, and yet improved. It is in its distresses that arrogance learns to know its folly; that man perceives his individual insignificance, discerns the importance of others to his well-being and even existence, and feels the necessity and the comfort of believing or

[8] Matt. West. 330.

[9] Malmsb. 242. Flor. Wig. 318. As Florence of Worcester mentions this elevation of Denulf, p. 318., he ought not to have been mentioned as an evidence against the incident as stated by Asser; yet Dr. Whitaker unguardedly so produces him, p. 239. Matt. West. 332. Denulf died bishop of Winchester in 909. Sax. Chron. 102.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

878.

hoping that there exists a Protector more powerful than himself. Humility, urbanity, philanthropy, decorum, and self-coercion, all the virtues which are requisite to produce the good will of our species, are among the offspring which nature has allotted to adversity, and which the wise and good have in every age adopted in their eclipse.[10] The sequel of Alfred's reign, which was a stream of virtue and intelligence, attests that his fortunate humiliation disciplined his temper, softened his heart, increased his piety, and enlightened his understanding.[11]

His mind was too powerful and too intelligent, either to remain inactive or to fail of discerning the best means of emancipating the country from its barbaric invaders; and his subsequent measures to regain his throne, and to surround it with its natural and impregnable bulwark, the confidence of his people, were judicious and exemplary. An auspicious incident occurred at this juncture to excite both their courage and his own perseverance.

Ubbo's attack in Devonshire.

Ubbo, who, with his brothers Ingwar and Halfden, had conducted the fatal fleet to England, to avenge the death of their father, and who had distinguished himself in the massacre at Peterborough, and who was now the only survivor of those children of Ragnar Lodbrog who had afflicted England, had been harassing the Britons in South Wales, where he had wintered. After much of that slaughter,

[10] "I honour solitude, the meditating sister of society, and often her legislator, who converts the experience or active life into principles, and its passions into nutricious juices." Herder's Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man, p. 511. Eng. ed. 1800.

[11] Asser's reflection at this period of Alfred's life seems to allude to his previous imperfections. He says he was afflicted, "that he might know that there exists one Lord of all to whom every knee must bow; in whose hands are the hearts of kings; who deposes the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble," p. 31.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878. which always attended their invasions, he returned with twenty-three ships to the English Channel. Sailing by the north of Devonshire, the castle of Kynwith[12] attracted his notice, where many of the king's thegns had embraced the protection of the Earl of Devon. The place was unprovided with subsistence. It had no stronger fortification than a Saxon wall[13]; but Ubbo found that its rocky situation made it impregnable against all assault, except at the eastern point. He also remarked that no water was near it, and consequently that a short siege would reduce the inhabitants to every misery of thirst and famine. He preferred the certain victory of a blockade to a bloody attack, and surrounded it with his followers.

Odun saw the extent of his distress, and the inevitable certainty on which the pagans calculated; and determined on a vigorous sally. It was bravely executed. While the dawn was mingling with the darkness, Odun pierced at once to the tent of Ubbo, slew him and his attendants, and turning on the affrighted host, destroyed the largest part; a few reached their vessels and escaped. An immense booty rewarded the victors, among which the capture of their magical standard, the famous Reafan, was to the eye of ignorant superstition a more fatal disaster than even Ubbo's death, and their destructive defeat.[14]

[12] Risdon places this castle near Apledore; it is called Henney Castle. 1 Gough's Camden, p. 40.

[13] Asser seems to treat Saxon fortifications with some contempt; for he says, that it was "omnino immunitam nisi quod mœnia nostro more erecta solum modo haberet," p. 32. He says he had seen this castle himself.

[14] Asser, 33. The Sax. Chron. makes the number of the slain 840. Flor. Wig. 1200, p. 316. Asser describes the raven as a banner woven by Ubbo's three sisters, the daughters of Ragnar Lodbrog, in

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IX.

878.

WHEN Easter had passed, Alfred, now twenty-eight years of age, began to execute a new plan of operations. The place of his retreat, as already described, was peculiarly fitted to be made a military post of the most defensible nature, and the king fortified it as his place of safety.[15]

Exertions of Alfred before he discovered himself to his people.

THE fullest account of the exertions of Alfred, during his seclusion in this little island[16], is that left by the Abbot of Croyland.

"THE king, overwhelmed with the disgrace of poverty and dejection, and instead of his royal palace, being confined to a vile hovel, was one day casually recognised by some of his people, who, being dispersed, and flying all around, stopped where he was. An eager desire then arose both in

one noon-tide. It was believed that the bird appeared as if flying when the Danes were to conquer, but was motionless when they were to be defeated. Asser adds, "et hoc sæpe probatum est," p. 33. He might have said that nothing was easier to be contrived. Bartholin has collected some traditions concerning such standards, and the raven's prophetic powers, p. 472—480.

[15] Dr. Whitaker, in June 1806, thought that the marshes on the new road near Taunton, were those in which Alfred found his refuge. This is the tradition of the country, where the Alfred's head has been taken for the sign of the inn: and an inscription has been set up about a mile to the west to commemorate the belief. The farm-house in this neighbourhood was then called Athelney, and at Burrowbridge there was at that time a pass over the Perrot which had a rounded hillock near it, at which a line of raised road from the east terminated. Mr. Collinson describes it as a very high and steep mount, on the east side of the river Perrot, which had on it part of the tower and walls of an ancient chapel.

The river was navigable to this hamlet, and further on to Langport, and had over it a stone bridge of three high arches. Dr. Whitaker thinks that on this mount Alfred built his fortification. Life of St. Neot, p. 245—8.

[16] A jewel of gold, enamelled like a bulla or amulet, to hang round the neck, circumscribed, Ælfred mec hehte gewyrcan, *i. e. Alfred ordered me to be made*, was found here. It is now in the Ashmolean Museum. 1 Gough's Camden, 70. It is engraved in that work, p. 59. and elsewhere.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

the king and his knights to devise a remedy for their fugitive condition.

"In a few days they constructed a place of defence as well as they could; and here recovering a little of his strength, and comforted by the protection of his few friends, he began to move in warfare against his enemies. His companions were very few in number, compared with the barbarian multitude; nor could they on the first day, or by their first attacks, obtain any advantages: yet they neither quitted the foe nor submitted to their defeats; but, supported by the hope of victory, as their small number gradually increased, they renewed their efforts, and made one battle but the preparation for another.

"Sometimes conquerors, and sometimes conquered, they learnt to overcome time by chances, and chance by time. The king, both when he failed and when he was successful, preserved a cheerful countenance, and supported his friends by his example."[17]

To this natural and intelligible account, we may add, from Asser, that the only land-access to their little island was by one bridge, on which by great labour they raised two defensive towers, or, as we should now call them, *têtes du pont*. From this fortified retreat, with his noble vassals in Somersetshire, he was continually assaulting the Danes.[18]

The same incidents are implied in the brief narrative of Matthew of Westminster. "While the king remained alone with the herdsman, there came to him many of his warriors; and by his directions they built a fortress with towers and defences, and

[17] MS. Claud. A. 5. p. 157. [18] Asser, Vit. p. 60.

Digitized by Google

from thence made continual irruptions on their enemies."[19]

878.

They led here an uncertain and unquiet life. They had no subsistence but what they could obtain by plunder, hunting, or fishing[20], in the adjoining districts. Here, dispossessed of his kingdom, the king concealed himself with a few of his friends among these woods and marshes, living on the fish they caught[21], for several weeks. He had none to aid him but a part of his own household.[22]

The plan of Alfred, suggested by the lonesomeness and security of his retreat, was as efficacious as it was wisely adapted to his position and necessities. With a small force he attacked without ceasing his superior enemies, whenever he found any of their parties or camps accessible to his attempts. His object achieved, or repulsed by a superior force, he retired with a celerity which baffled pursuit to his unknown asylum, and soon harassed the enemy with hostility in a distant quarter. By day and by night, at dawn, in the evening twilight, from woods and marshes, he was ever rushing on the Northmen with all the advantages of selection and surprise.[23]

By these expeditions Alfred provided himself and his party with sustenance; he inured himself to war and skilful generalship; he improved in his knowlege of the country, secured the attachment of his friends, collected others, provided new resources of character for his future life, collected

[19] Matt. West. p. 330.
[20] Ran. Higden Polych. p. 257. Bromton, 811.
[21] Ethelred. Abb. p. 353. [22] Ethelwerd, Chron. 845.
[23] MSS. Claud. Wallingf. p. 537.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 878.

perpetual intelligence of the motions of the Danes, revived the spirit of the country, and prepared it for that grand exploit which was soon to crown his labours.

During his residence in this fenny isle, an incident occurred, which the monks are particular in recording as a proof of the improvement of his disposition; and as it shows both his situation and his benevolent temper, it is worth our reciting, though without those additions of celestial machinery, with which the tenants of the cloister seem to have been as warmly enamoured, as any possessor of the epic laurel.

His charity.

His wife and family had joined him. His friends were abroad in search of food, and his queen and one thegn only were with him.[24] It was his custom when alone here to be reading the books of Scripture, hymns, or the annals of his country, and the actions of illustrious men.[25] He was sitting by himself reading one of these, when he was interrupted by a feeble knock at his gate, and by the lowly cry of poverty supplicating relief. He remembered the state of penury in which he had reached the same spot: he laid down his book, and called his thegn to give the poor claimant some food. The thegn found only one loaf in their store, which would not suffice for their family on their return from their toilsome expedition, and a little wine. Alfred thought the necessities of the mendicant more urgent than their own, and reserving a part of the pittance for his friends, he presented the beggar with the rest.[26]

[24] Sim. Dun. Hist. Cuthb. p. 71.
[25] Ingulf, p. 26. Ethel. Abb. 353.
[26] Sim. Dun. 71. Ing. 26. Ethel. 353.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

The Battle which produced ALFRED'S *Restoration.*

CHAP. X. 878.

AFTER passing about six months in this retreat[1], Alfred revolved in his mind the means of surprising the main army of the Northmen, which still continued in Wiltshire. It was encamped on and about Bratton-hill, at Eddendun[2], near Westbury. And it is a tradition which some of the most respectable of our ancient chroniclers have recorded, that he resolved to inspect their camp in person, before he made the attempt. His early predilection for the Saxon poetry[3] and music had qualified him to assume the character of an harper; and thus disguised, he went to the Danish tents. His harp

[1] Mr. Walker, in his notes to Sir John Spelman's Life of Alfred, computes, that Alfred's seclusion did not last six months. Chippenham was taken in January, and the great battle which produced his restoration was fought seven weeks after Easter. Easter-day was in that year the 28d of March; p. 30. The seventh week after that would of course be the eleventh of May, which does not allow the retreat to have been five months.

[2] A part of Mr. Walker's curious note is worth translating: "Eddendun lies under Bratton-hill, which is lofty, abrupt, and of difficult ascent: on its summit there are yet extant the trenches and ditches of the Danish camp. Two branches for the sake of water, spread to the foot of the mountain. Here, weary of the confinement of a camp, and under no alarm of any hostile troops, the Danes diffused themselves to Eddendun, and over the neighbouring plain. It is probable that the king had notice of this descent, and resolved to examine the fact in person." Mr. Walker hints, that the king may have made his attack between their army and the hill, so as to separate them from their encampment. Not. Vit. Ælfredi, p. 33.

[3] See before, p. 500.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 878.

and singing excited notice; he was admitted to their king's table; he heard their conversation, and contemplated their position unsuspected. He quitted their encampment without molestation, and reached his little isle in safety.[4] There is nothing improbable in the incident, nor is it inconsistent with the manners of the time.

It was now Whitsuntide. He sent confidential messengers to his principal friends in the three adjacent counties, Wilts, Hampshire, and Somerset, announcing his existence; declaring his intention of joining them, and requiring them to collect their followers secretly, and to meet him in military array on the east of Selwood Forest.[5] A dream, of St. Neot's appearing to him, and promising him both assistance and a great success, is placed at this crisis. It may have been suggested by the king's policy, or may have occurred naturally from his memory of his sacred monitor; and anticipating its encouraging effects, he may have circulated it among his friends.[6]

A CELEBRATED place called the stone of Egbert[7],

[4] This incident is mentioned by Ingulf, who was a lad in the reign of Edward the Confessor, p. 26.; by Malmsbury, p. 43.; both highly respectable chroniclers; and by Higden in his Polych. 258. It is also in the MSS. Chronicles of Henry de Silgrave, Cleop. A. 12., and of Joh. Bever. Harl. Coll. 641. That others omit it may be accounted for by their desire of attributing the victory to St. Neot's miraculous interference, rather than to the plans of the king's previously exerted sagacity.

[5] This was named in British Coit mawr, the great wood. Asser, 33. The county (perhaps from the wood) was anciently called Sealpubꝛcipe. Ethelw. p. 837. The wood reaches from Frome to Burham, near fifteen miles in length, and six in breadth. 1 Gough's Camden, 78. Seal, in Saxon, is a willow-tree. This was, therefore, a wood of willows; and so the MSS. Claud. names it, sylvam salicis.

[6] Both the MS. lives of St. Neot, and Asser's Annals, mention this.

[7] Asser, 33. Flor. Wig. MSS. Claud.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. X.

878.

was the appointed place of meeting. As the Anglo-Saxons had suffered severely in his absence, the tidings of his being alive, and the prospect of his re-appearance, filled every bosom with joy. All who were entrusted with the secret crowded enthusiastically to the place appointed, and the horns, trumpets, and clashing of the arms of those who came, and of those who welcomed the loyal patriots, loudly expressed their mutual congratulations and exultation.[8]

Two days were passed in these arrivals and rejoicings, and in making the necessary arrangements for the consequential exertion. Some rumours of what was preparing reached the ears of Godrun, the Danish king[9], but nothing to explain the meditated blow. He called in his forces to be prepared; but as he saw no collected enemy, he had no object before him to move against.

On the third day Alfred marched his new-raised army to Ægglea[10], seized an adjoining hill; encamped that night there, and again reconnoitered his enemies' position.[11] In the morning they ad-

[8] MSS. Claud. p. 158. That Alfred invited Rollo out of France to his aid, and that Rollo came to help him, is a circumstance which I have found in Wallingford only (p. 537.), and therefore cannot state it as a fact on his single authority. It is not probable of itself; and yet it is difficult to account for its invention, if false.

[9] MSS. Claud.

[10] Asser, 34. Ægglea has been conjectured to be the village Leigh. Gough's Camden, p. 100. Dr. Whitaker prefers Highley, near Whaddon, p. 266. Gibson suggested Clay-hill, near Warminster.

[11] MSS. Claud. p. 158, 159. Dr. Whitaker thinks the present Yatton, about five miles from Chippenham, to be the representative of Ethandun. He adds, "But the battle itself was a little lower on the Avon, at Slaughter-ford," p. 268. Gibson mentions a tradition of the inhabitants, of a great slaughter of the Danes at this place. I remark that the place is called Assandune by Sim. Dun. p. 71.; Edderandun by Hoveden, 417.; Ethandune by Ethelwerd, 845. Camden places it at Edindon or Eddington, the place mentioned in note 1.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

vanced rapidly to the place called Ethandune, where the northern myriads were overspreading the plain.

ALFRED halted to form them into a skilful arrangement, and made a short but impressive address. He reminded them that they were about to combat both for their country and for themselves; he conjured them to act like men, and he promised them a glorious victory.[12] They advanced when he had concluded, and soon beheld the invading warriors before them, but whether resting in their camp, or arrayed for battle, is not clearly expressed. The attack was meant, by the secrecy and celerity of the movement, to be a surprise, and most probably was so, and the expressions used by most of the chroniclers imply this circumstance.

The battle at Ethandune.

THE Anglo-Saxons rushed on their enemies with an impetuosity which disordered valour was unable to withstand. It was Alfred who led them on; who seemed to have risen from his grave to destroy them. The discharge of the Anglo-Saxon arrows was succeeded by the attack of their lances, and soon it became a personal combat of swords.[13] The Northmen resisted with their usual individual intrepidity; but their efforts, though furious, were unavailing. Seeing a standard-bearer leading on one of his divisions with great bravery, Alfred is represented to have pointed him out to his warriors as St. Neot himself at their head.[14] The belief increased their enthusiasm; their resolute attack was every where irresistible; and the Northmen gave way. Their bodies strewed the plain, till a part

[12] MSS. Claud. p. 159.
[13] MSS. Claud.
[14] MSS. Claud. p. 159.

Digitized by Google

found refuge with their king in a neighbouring fortification; Alfred was thus left the master of that important field, which, from the marshes and penury of Ethelingey, exalted him again to the throne of England.[15] CHAP. X. 878.

THE king, with vigorous judgment, followed the Northmen to their fortress; and, contrary to their hopes, encamped himself strongly round it. By this decisive measure he cut them off from all reinforcement, and confined them to the scanty subsistence which happened to be in their station. While the siege lasted, the strength of Alfred augmented in a proportion which destroyed in the Danes every hope of emancipation. They lingered in unavailing distress for fourteen days, and then, oppressed with cold and famine, and worn down by fatigue and dismay, the imprisoned chiefs humbly supplicated the mercy of their conqueror.[16] Its success.

THUS, after a very doubtful struggle for the sovereignty of the island, during twelve years of peril and calamity, the Anglo-Saxons by this battle triumphed over their enemies, and surmounted one of the most formidable invasions that any nation

[15] Asser, 34. Mr. Gough remarks, that on the south-west face of the hill, near Edindon, there is a most curious monument unnoticed by Bishop Gibson. It is a white horse, in a walking attitude, cut out of the chalk, fifty-four feet high, from his toe to his chest; and to the tip of his ear near one hundred feet high, and from ear to tail one hundred feet long. The learned editor of Camden thinks, that it was made to commemorate this celebrated victory, p. 100, 101. Yet Whitaker, p. 273., has remarked, that Wise, in 1742, declared it had been wrought by the inhabitants of Westbury in the memory of persons then living.

[16] Asser, 34. Flor. Wig. 317. Sax. Chron. 85. Whitaker, p. 269., supposes the fortress to which the Danes fled to have been the double entrenchment in Bury-wood, which is thus described by Gough: "On Colerne-down, on the fosse near Wraxhall and Slaughterford, in Bury-wood, is North-wood, a camp of eighteen acres, double works, not Roman: the entrance from Colerne-down." p. 99

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

had experienced. To this great achievement, to the talents which planned, and to the energy which accomplished it, words can add no praise. It was the triumph of mind over barbarian strength; of a wisely conceiving and arranging intelligence over superiority of number, elation from past successes, and a hardihood of personal valour which no competition could excel. It was as complete in its beneficial effects as it was brilliant in its immediate glory.

The immediate conditions which Alfred imposed, were, hostages, which were not reciprocal, and oaths that they should leave his dominions. These, however, were of puerile importance, because Godrun, having got released from his confinement, might have acted with the same contempt of diplomatic and religious faith, for which his countrymen were notorious. Alfred had learnt that oaths and hostages were but bonds of sand, and therefore relied no longer upon these.

His comprehensive mind conceived and executed the magnanimous policy of making Godrun and his followers his allies, and of leading them to agriculture, civilisation, and Christianity. To effect this, he persuaded them to exchange their Paganism for the Christian religion, and on these terms he admitted them to cultivate and possess East Anglia as peaceful colonists.

After some weeks, Godrun, to whom the conditions were acceptable, went with thirty of his chiefs to Aulre[17], near Ethelney, where, Alfred

[17] Asser, 85. Mr. Walker thinks, it was the modern Aulre, an inconsiderable place near Ethelney. Wedmor was not less than twelve miles from it. At Wedmor, the white garments and mystic veil, then appropriated to baptism, were given. Vit. Ælf. 85.

Digitized by Google

standing as his godfather, he was baptised by the name of Ethelstan. The ceremony was completed a week after at the royal town of Wædmor. He stayed twelve days with the king, as his guest, and received magnificent presents at his departure.[18] CHAP. X. 878.

SUCH a conversion could be but nominal; but the religious tenets of the unreflective mass of mankind are little else. The object of Alfred was to place them immediately under new habits, which would give them dipositions more compatible with the well-being of society than their ferocious Paganism. To time, reflection, and tuition, he left their further progress in the system he revered.

GODRUN, to fulfil his engagements with Alfred, left Chippenham, and went into Gloucestershire. He remained at Cirencester[19] a year, and then marching into East Anglia, he divided it among his soldiers, and they cultivated it.[20]

ALTHOUGH the Northmen came to England as the ministers of vengeance, yet, by residing in it for twelve years, they must have become more sensible to the charms of civilised life. The bands under Halfden attested this impression when they cultivated Northumbria. Having thus turned their swords into ploughshares, they gave no assistance to Godrun in his invasion of Wessex; and

[18] Asser, 35. MSS. Vesp. D. 14. Flor. 318. Sax. Chron. 85.

[19] Cirrenceastre, qui Brittannice Cairceri nominatur, quæ est in meridiana parte Huicciorum; ibique per unum annum mansit. Asser, 35.

[20] An. 880. Cirrenceastre deserens, ad orientales Anglos perrexit. ipsam quæ regionem dividens, cæpit inhabitare. Asser, 35. Þepe ꝑop ꝑe hepe oꝼ Cyꝑenceaꝛcꝑe on Eaꝛt Engle, anꝺ ȝeꝛæꝺ the lonꝺ, anꝺ ȝebælꝺe. Sax. Chron. 86. This printed chronicle dates their occupation of East Anglia in 879. The MS. chronicle places it, like Asser, in 880. Cot. Lib. Tib. B. 4. p. 35.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

878.

if left unmolested, and not endangered, it was probable they would continue to be pacific. By admitting Godrun to imitate their example, Alfred calmed their inquietude; and by giving this occupation to Godrun, he secured safety to himself: the beginning change in the manners of the North was cherished in its most important crisis; and, as the Danes became civilised in East Anglia, they were compelled, for their own safety, to form a barrier, defending the most exposed coast of the island from their more ferocious countrymen.[21]

[21] Saxo places a Gormo Anglicus soon after Ragnar Lodbrog, p. 178. In the Chronicon of Eric he is surnamed Enske, the Englishman, and is there said to have been baptised in England. 1 Langb. 158. Hamsfort says, he went to England, and was converted by Alfred; ib. p. 37. If so, he was the Godrun here mentioned.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

Review of the Causes and Consequences of the NORTHMAN *Invasions.* —*The Actions of* HASTINGS, *and his Invasions of* ENGLAND.— ALFRED'S *Death.*

CHAP. XI.

878.

ALFRED having permitted Godrun to colonise East Anglia, the limits of their respective territories were settled by a treaty, which still exists.[1] By the first article, the boundary was placed in the Thames, the river Lea to its source, and Watling Street to the Ouse.[2] The spaces thus marked contained Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, part of Hertfordshire, part of Bedfordshire, and a little of Huntingdonshire.[3] These regions were subjected to Godrun, and were filled with Danes.[4]

[1] It is in Wilkins's Leges Anglo-Saxonicæ, p. 47. The beginning may be quoted as an intimation of the parties to such transactions: "Thiſ iſ the fꝛýthe tha Ælfꝛeð cýninz anð Luthꝛun cýninz, anð ealleſ Ænzel cýnneſ ꝛican anð eal ꝛeo theoð the on Eaſt-Enzlum beoth, ealle zecpeðen habbath anð mið athum zeſæſtnoð ꝛoꝛ hi ſýlfe anð ꝛoꝛ heoꝛa zingꝛan ze ꝛoꝛ zeboꝛene, ze ꝛoꝛ unzeboꝛene, the zoðeſ milcte ꝛecca oththe uꝛe."

[2] The words are, "Æꝛeſt ýmb uꝛe landzemeꝛa upon Temeſe, anð thonne upon Lizan anð anðlanz Lizan oth hiꝛe æꝛýlm, thonne on zeꝛihт to Bebanꝛoꝛða, thon upon Uꝛan oth Wætlinzaſtꝛet." p. 47.

[3] Sir John Spelman places Northumbria also under Godrun, p. 66. He is certainly sanctioned by Malmsbury, p. 43.; but Asser, 35.; Florence, 328.; Sax. Chron. 86.; Ethelwerd, 845.; Hunt. 350.; Ingulf, 26.; and Mailros, 144., unite in merely stating Godrun's occupation of East Anglia. The grammatical construction of the Saxon treaty appears to me to imply no more.

[4] The other articles of the treaty are legal regulations. Spelman's Summary may be cited: They provide "that there shall be one and the same estimation of person, both of English and Dane, and the mulct for slaughter of them both alike. That a thane of the king's

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 878.

Northumbria was afterwards put under Guthred, who governed Deira; and Egbert ruled in Bernicia.[5]

THE sovereignty of Mercia, on the defeat of the Danes[6], fell into the power of Alfred. He did not, however, avowedly incorporate it with Wessex. He discontinued its regal honours, and constituted Ethelred its military commander, to whom he afterwards married his danghter, Ethelfleda, when her age permitted.[7]

THE reign of Alfred, from his restoration to his death, was wise and prosperous. One great object of his care was, to fortify his kingdom against hostile attacks. He rebuilt the cities and castles which had been destroyed, and constructed new fortifications in every useful place; and he divided the country into hundreds and tythings for its better military defence and internal peace, and to repel that disposition for depredation which was pre-

being questioned for manslaughter, or any offence above four marks, shall be tried by twelve of his peers, and others by eleven of their peers, and one of the king's men. That no buying of men, horse, or oxen, shall be justifiable without voucher of the seller, and his avowing the sale. And, lastly, that there shall be no licentious intercourse of the soldiers of the one with those of the other army." p. 68. Hearne's ed.

[5] Mailros, 145. In 890, Godrun died in East Anglia. Flor. 328.; and Guthred in Northumbria died 894. Sim. Dun. 133. and 70. Mailros, 146.

[6] Spelman thinks that the superior sovereignty of Alfred was preserved in his treaties with the Danes. He remarks from Malmsbury, that Alfred gave the dominion to Godrun, ut eas sub fidelitate regis jure hereditario foveret, and that the very joining in the laws shows that the one was a vassal. p. 69.

[7] It is said in the Saxon life of Neot, that after the pacification, Godrun, with the remains of his army, departed in peace to his own country, "to hiſ agenem eaŋde miδ ealne ſibbe." MSS. Vesp. D. 14. This seems to imply a return to Denmark, as East Anglia was not properly his own country.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

878.

vailing even among his own subjects.[8] By these defensive precautions, he gave to the country a new face, and not only kept in awe the Northmen who were in it, but was prepared to wage, with advantage, that defensive war, which the means and disposition of the impetuous invaders could never successfully withstand.

Another attempt of the Northmen.

THE policy of Alfred's conduct towards Godrun was evinced and rewarded immediately afterwards. A large fleet of Northmen arrived in the Thames, who joined Godrun, as if desirous to unite with him in a new warfare; but, Alfred having pacified his ambition, these adventurers found no encouragement to continue here. They wintered at Fulham, and then followed their leader, the famous Hastings, into Flanders; and remained a year at Ghent.[9]

ALFRED discerned the inestimable benefit to England of creating a naval armament for the protection of its coast from the adventurers that now swarmed on the ocean. This king, who never used war but from necessity, which he deplored, may be considered as the founder of the English navy. In this, however, he was but the copyist of Charlemagne, whose policy of building ships to repress the northern invasions has been noticed before.[10] Alfred had already experienced the efficacy of a few ships of war. In 882, he was pre-

[8] Ingulf, 27. Matt. West. 345. [9] Asser, 35, 36. Malmsb. 48.

[10] About this time kings seem to have thought of navies. In 888, Mahomet, the Saracen king in Corduba, ordered ships to be built at Corduba, Hispali, and in other places where wood abounded. Of this king it is said, that as he was walking in his garden, a soldier exclaimed, "What a beautiful place! What a delightful day! How charming would life be if death never came!"—"You are wrong," answered Mahomet; "if death never had come, I should not have reigned here." Rod. Tol. Hist. Arab. c. 28. p. 24.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

pared to engage in a naval conflict, and took two ships. The chief of two others and the crews, but not until they were all wounded, submitted to him.[11]

878.

884. Another attempt.

THE army of the Northmen on the Scheld divided into two branches. One moved against Eastern France; the other invaded England, and besieged Rochester. They built a castle against its gate, but the valour of the citizens prolonged their defence, till Alfred, with a great army, approached to relieve them. On the king's sudden presence, the Pagans abandoned their tower, all the horses which they had brought from France, and the greatest part of their captives, and fled with precipitation to their ships. Compelled by extreme necessity, they returned in the same summer to France.[12]

ALFRED, improving the hour of success, directed his fleet, full of warriors, to East Anglia, where new bands of depredation had arrived or were forming. They met thirteen war-ships of the Danes ready for battle. The Saxons attacked and took them, with all their booty; the crews fighting fiercely, till every one perished. But the Saxons forgot the suspicious vigilance which should always be maintained on an enemy's coast. The Danes gathered all their ships together, and coming on the fleet of Alfred, which was at the mouth of the river, they obtained a victory of superiority or surprise.[13] The colonising followers of Godrun

[11] Asser, 36. Sax. Chron. 86. [12] Asser, 37.

[13] Asser, 38. The Cotton MSS. and the editions of Parker and Camden say, the English fleet dormiret. Florence, in relating the incident, substitutes the word rediret, p. 821.; and the Saxon. Chron. p. 87. hampeapb penbon.

Digitized by Google

broke their treaty with Alfred; but as no account of the consequences is transmitted to us, the peace was probably soon restored.[14] CHAP. XI. 884.

THE most brilliant incident in the life of Alfred was his defence of England against the formidable Hastings, which has not hitherto been sufficiently remarked. In his struggles against the Northmen, over whom he prevailed at Eddinton, he had to oppose power rather than ability; but in resisting Hastings, he had to withstand a skilful veteran, disciplined in all the arts of war by thirty years' practice of it; renowned for his numerous successes in other regions, and putting in action a mass of hostility, which might have destroyed a man of less ability than the Saxon king.

Actions of Hastings.

HASTINGS must have long been a favourite of tradition, because he was one of those heroic and successful adventurers whom popular fame loves to celebrate, and sometimes to fancy. Time has, however, so much to record, such numerous characters to perpetuate, that it suffers many to fall into the shroud of oblivion, of whom our curiosity would desire a distinct memorial. Hastings has scarcely survived the general lot.[15] We know him but by a few imperfect fragments: they announce a character of high importance in his day, but they give us little acquaintance with his individual features.

HE first appears to us as selected by Ragnar

[14] Asser, 39. A great army of Northmen was at this time attacking the continental Saxons and Frisians. Ibid. 38.

[15] Dudo has attempted to draw his character; but he has only recollected and applied to him thirty-two vituperative epithets from the Latin language, strung into hexameters. One of the historian's bright ideas is, that Hastings should be non atramento verum carbone notandus, p. 63.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

884.

Lodbrog, to initiate his son, Biorn, in the habit of piracy[16]: that he possessed the virtues of a vikingr, intrepidity, activity, and ferocity, is evinced by the office which Ragnar assigned him.

He fulfilled his military duty with distinguished courage; for he led his young pupil into a collision with the Franks. To detail his successful depredations against this powerful nation[17] would be to repeat much of those descriptions with which our annals abound.

Charles at last bought off his hostility, and the ambitious Northman is said to have formed the bold hope of conquering, for his master, the imperial dignity. To accomplish this project, he sailed to Italy[18], and, mistaking the city Luna[19] for Rome,

[16] Hastings had been the nutritius of Biorn. Ord. Vital. p. 458. Snorre gives a similar instance, in Olaf Helga's history. This prince first began piracy at the age of twelve, under the tuition of Ran, his foster-father. Hastings is also mentioned by his contemporary Odo, an abbot of Clugny, in his account of St. Martin. 7 Bib. Mag. Pat. p. 637.

[17] For his actions, see Gemmeticensis Hist. lib. ii. c. 5. p. 218. Dudo, lib. i. c. 1. p. 63. Ord. Vitalis, lib. iii. p. 458. The chronicles cited by Du Chesne, p. 25. and 32. of his Hist. Norm. Scriptores. The authorities vary much as to the year of the attack. Some place it in 843, others in 851.

[18] Chron. Turonense, p. 25. Du Chesne, Script. Norm. Chron. Floriac. p. 32. ibid. Dudo, p. 64. Gemmet. 220.

[19] Luna is mentioned in Strabo, p. 339. It is thus noticed by Condamine in his Tour to Italy in 1757: "In passing from Genoa to Lerici on board a felucca, I entered the gulf of *Specia*, where I saw a spring of fresh water in the midst of the sea. This gulf, on the borders of which *are seen* the ruins of the ancient city *Luna*, destroyed by the Saracens, forms the most beautiful and the largest port of the Mediterranean, and perhaps of the whole world. It is of this port that Silus Italicus said,

"'Quo nos spatiosior alter
Innumeras cepisse rates et claudere portum.'
L. 8. v. 481.

It comprehends within its sweep, and in its bay, several other ports; two naval armaments may lie there at anchor without seeing each other."

Digitized by Google

he attacked and obtained it. The geographical error, and his ignorance of the country, occasioned him to return. But the scheme evinces the largeness of ambition, and prospect, to which the fame and actions of Ragnar was expanding the Northman mind.

He landed again in France[20], and from him and others renewed destruction became its fate. The government was weak, and the country factious. Sometimes the assailants were bought off.[21] Sometimes the rivers were fortified to prevent their ingress.[22] A general assembly of the powerful chiefs was in one year convened, to provide an united defence[23]; and an edict was afterwards passed, awarding death to all who should give breast-plates, arms, or horses, to Northmen, even though it was to procure their own redemption.[24] But the particular actions of Hastings are not now to be traced, because, though the chronicles of France abound with depredations, they often omit the name of the commanding adventurer.

He appears to us, however, twice by name in the annals of Regino. Once in the year 867, as com-

[20] Dudo, p. 65. The Gesta Normannorum does not state when they returned from Italy, but mentions that, in 869, part returned to Italy, p. 3.

[21] In 869, Charles gave them 4000 pounds of silver, and raised this sum by exacting six denarii from every manso ingenuili et de servili tres et de accolis unus et de duobus hospitibus unus et decima de omnibus quæ negotiatores videbantur habere. Gesta Norman. Du Chesne, p. 3. So in 870, they obtained a great donation of silver, corn, wine, and cattle, p. 4., &c.

[22] Ann. Bertiniani, an. 864.

[23] In Junio 864, celebrantur Comitia Pistensia quo regem et proceres traxerat generalis necessitas instituendi munitiones contra Normannos. Capit. Reg. ap. 1 Lang. 558.

[24] Capit. Reg. ap. 1 Lang. 558. When the Pope Nicolaus cited the bishops of France, they excused themselves on account of the Northmen. 1 Lang. 568.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

pelled to fortify himself in a church, sallying from which, he destroyed Count Robert the Strong[25], who has been called the greatest captain which France then had.[26] Again, in the year 874, as hovering about Bretagne, and accepting a defiance from a celebrated Breton warrior, whose courage excited his admiration, and averted or deterred his hostility.[27]

884.

In 879 he was in England, as before mentioned, at Fulham; but as he received no co-operation from Godrun, whom Alfred had wisely pacified, he sailed to Ghent[28], and joined vigorously in those furious assaults by which the kingdom of France was for thirteen years again desolated, and endangered.[29]

893.

Defeated at length by the imperial forces, Hastings marched to Boulogne, and constructing there a large fleet[30], he determined to try his fortune against Alfred in England. Perhaps weary of a life of wandering warfare, he now hoped to extort an English kingdom, or to be chosen king of the Anglo-Danes, as no chieftain of the North-

[25] Regino, p. 481. Pistor. Script. Germ.

[26] Cet fut ainsi que perit alors Robert le Fort le plus grand capitaine qu'il y eust alors en France. Daniel, Hist. de France, vol. ii. p. 99.

[27] Regino, p. 55.

[28] It is Malmsbury who has affixed his name to this incident. Asser and others mention the arrival at Fulham, and the departure. Malmsbury says, "Cæteri ex Danis qui Christiani esse recusassent, cum Hastingo mare transfretaverunt ubi quæ mala fecerunt indigine norunt." p. 43.

[29] During this period they were once defeated by Louis: a song, in the ancient Teutonic language, written at the time, on this victory, still exists. Their siege of Paris, and its defence in 886, is narrated in a curious poem of Abbo, who was in the scene of action, and who has transmitted to us a full description of the incident. It is in Du Chesne; and 2 Langb. 76—106.

[30] Ethelwerd.

Digitized by Google

men was then surviving of equal celebrity with himself. CHAP. XI.

FIFTEEN years had now elapsed since Alfred's restoration, and he had employed the interval in executing every scheme which his active wisdom could form, for the improvement and protection of his people. His activity in defeating this attempt is a remarkable feature in a character so contemplative. The sudden invasion of Hastings compelled him to abandon literature and ease, for an unremitted exertion of sagacity and courage, in the decline of his life, and towards the end of his reign. 893.

HASTINGS attacked Alfred with peculiar advantages. As the Northmen were in possession of Northumbria and East Anglia, he had only to contend against the strength of Wessex and its dependencies. Godrun was dead[31]; whose friendship with Alfred might have counteracted his invasion. If his countrymen in England declined to assist him by their active co-operation, he was sure of their neutrality, and he relied on their secret connivance. He shaped his operation in conformity to this political situation. By not landing in East Anglia and Northumbria, he avoided the means of exciting their jealousy; and by directing his fleet to Kent, he was enabled to profit from their vicinity. If he were defeated, they might afford him a shelter; if successful, they could immediately assist. On these occasions we must also recollect, that the assailing force did not merely consist of those who at first invaded. The landing actually made, usually drew to the enterprise many of the

[31] He died 890. Sax. Chron. p. 90.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

893. independent bands that were floating about. It may have been from these supplies that Hastings continued the struggle so long.

Two hundred and fifty vessels sailed to the south-west coast of Kent, and landed near Romney-marsh, at the eastern termination of the great wood or weald of Anderida.[32] They drew up their ships to the weald, four miles from the outward mouth of the river, and there attacked and mastered a fortification which the peasants of the country were constructing in the fens. They built a stronger military work at Apuldre, on the Rother, and ravaged Hampshire and Berkshire.[33]

Soon afterwards, Hastings himself appeared with the division he had selected to be under his own command, consisting of eighty ships, in the Thames. He navigated them into the East Swale, landed at Milton, near Sittingbourn, and threw up a strong intrenchment, which continued visible for ages.[33]

This distribution of his forces was judicious. The two armies were but twenty miles asunder, and could therefore act separately, or combine for any joint operation which prudence or exigency should direct. The vicinity of their countrymen in Essex secured them from any attacks on the right, and the sea was their frontier on the left. The fertile districts in the east part of Kent became their spoil without a blow; and thus Hastings secured an ample supply, and a safe position, which courage and policy might convert into a kingdom.

[32] The Saxon Chronicle says, they landed at Limine muthan, p. 91. This authority describes this wood as then being 120 miles long from east to west, and 30 broad.

[33] Sax. Chron. 92. Ethelw. 846. Matt. West. 345.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

894.

WHILE Alfred prepared for measures of active resistance, he endeavoured to bind the Northumbrians and East Anglians to peace, by oaths and hostages; but the sympathetic temptations to plunder, which the presence and situation of Hastings presented, overcame their young religion and their honour. When the armies of Hastings pervaded the country in occasional excursions, they joined in the enterprise, and sometimes they made aggressions themselves.[34]

IN this perilous conjuncture, Alfred, with cool judgment, distinguished the dangerous from the temporary attack. He neglected the East Anglians; he left the country which they could infest to the protection of its inhabitants, and the fortified cities which he had provided; and he encamped, with his collected army, between the two divisions of the Danes: the forest on the one side, and waters upon the other, protected his flanks, and gave security to his encampment.[35]

BY this judicious station he separated the invaders from the East Anglians, and at the same time kept asunder the two armies of the Northmen. He watched their movements, and was prepared to pour his avenging troops on either which should attempt to molest his people beyond the districts in which they resided. They sometimes endeavoured to plunder in places where the royal army was absent; but bands from the neighbouring cities, or Alfred's patrolling parties, both by day and night, chastised their ravages.[35]

THE king's discretion and activity awed even

[34] Sax. Chron. 92. Flor. Wig. 329.
[35] Sax. Chron. 92. Flor. 330. Matt. West. 346.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV. 894.

Hastings. It was so unlike the disorderly warfare which he had experienced in France, that for some time he seemed intimidated by an enemy whose strength was multiplied by his judgment. Alfred's position was too strong to be attacked without assured peril; and as the king despised the valour of temerity, he forbore to assault the Danes in their intrenchments. His hope was to acquire a certain victory from a Fabian caution, combined with a Fabian vigilance.

THE plan of Alfred required the aid of time, and a permanent force: but the conditions of military service prevented the Saxon army from being perpetually in the field. To remedy this inconvenience, which would have robbed him of all the advantages he projected, Alfred divided his army into two bodies: of these, he called one to the warlike campaign, while the individuals of the other were enjoying peaceably their private occupations. After a reasonable service, the active portion was allowed to return home, and the rest quitted their domestic hearths to supply the place of their retiring countrymen. Thus while he avoided every necessity of rushing to a precipitate attack, he always presented to the invaders a strong and undiminished force.

SURPRISED at this new phenomenon, Hastings and his confederates remained in their camps, discontented, coerced, and overawed. The East Anglians, who watched the motions of Hastings, forbore any material warfare while he remained inactive.

WEARY of this destructive confinement, Hastings resolved at last to emancipate himself. To deceive Alfred, he sent his two sons to be baptized, and

Digitized by Google

promised to leave the kingdom.[86] Then, at the same instant that he took to his shipping, as if to fulfil his engagement, his main army suddenly broke up their encampments, and passed beyond the army of Alfred into the interior of the country. Their object was to reach the Thames, where fordable, and to pass into Essex, where they could unite. The celerity of their movements prevented his vigilance, and an ample booty was their first reward. But the wakeful monarch was not long outstripped; he pursued with a speed commensurate to theirs, while his son Edward advanced to the same point with the warriors which he had collected.[87] Alfred reached them at Farnham, in Surrey, and hastening into action, with as much judgment as he had before deferred it, he defeated them so decisively, and pursued them with such vigour, that they were compelled to plunge into the Thames, without a ford, for shelter against his sword. Their king, desperately wounded, was saved with difficulty, being carried over the river on horseback. They who could swim, escaped into Middlesex. Alfred followed them through this county into Essex, and drove them across Essex over the Coln. In this point they found a refuge in the Isle of Mersey. The defences of this place secured them from attack, and the king had no ships to make his siege effectual.[88] His forces

894.

[86] Matt. West. 346.

[87] It is Ethelwerd who mentions the prince's exertions. His chronicle in this part is obviously the translation of a Saxon song on this struggle, p. 846.

[88] Matt. West. 346. Bishop Gibson says of Mersey Island, which contains eight parishes, "It is a place of great strength, and may be almost kept against all the world; for which reason the Parliament clapped in a thousand men to guard it from being seized by the Dutch, about the beginning of the Dutch war." Camd. 359.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

maintained the blockade as long as their time of service, and their provisions allowed them.[39] Alfred then marched thither with other forces from the county, whose allotment it was to continue the siege. The king of the Northmen being wounded, they were compelled to stay in their position. They now sued for peace, and agreed to retire from England.[40]

894.

While Alfred was thus victoriously employed, the exhortations of Hastings produced at last their effect on the Danish colonists of Northumbria and East Anglia. Unable to resist the wish of seeing a countryman on the throne of Wessex, they combined their exertions to make two diversions in favour of the invaders. With a hundred ships they passed the North Foreland, and sailed along the southern coasts, while a fleet of forty vessels successfully attempted a passage round the north of the island. Their scheme was to attack in two points. The larger armament besieged Exeter; the other, reaching the Bristol Channel, surrounded a fortress in the north part of the county.[41]

The king was preparing to renew the blockade of Mersey, when the intelligence reached him of these invasions in the west. The possession of Devonshire was perilous to his best interests. The Welsh might be stimulated to take advantage of his difficulties; and if this county had been occupied by Danes, from its maritime conveniences, it might be difficult to dislodge them. Alfred therefore determined, at every hazard, to have Exeter

[39] The passage is curious: "Tha beſet ſio ſyſþ hie þæn utan þa hpile þe hie lenȝeſt mete hæþbon. Ac hie hæþbon þa hioꝑa temn ȝeſetenne anb hioꝑa mete ȝenoꝺuþne." Sax. Chron. 93.

[40] Ethelwerd, 846. [41] Sax. Chron. 93. Flor. Wig. 330.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

relieved. He left his eastern troops to proceed to the siege of Mersey; and he hastened to protect his endangered fortresses in Devonshire. 894.

In the mean time, Hastings had been more fortunate in his movement than his discomfited friends. He got out of the Swale, and crossing the Thames, he established himself at South Benfleet, near the Canvey Isle, in Essex; but he had not been able to abandon Kent with total impunity. The same superintending genius which had chased the invaders from Farnham to Mersey had watched the paths of Hastings, and as soon as he had left his intrenched camp, it was immediately attacked, and all his wealth and booty that it contained were taken, with his wife and children. Alfred baptized the boys; and, hoping to overcome the enmity of his competitor by liberality, he restored the captives with great presents.[42] But the delicate emotions of cultivated sentiment could not operate on the furious ambition of a sea-king, who subsisted by his army and his ravages. If he could not conquer a territorial settlement, he must pirate or perish. His friendship, therefore, did not survive his fear; nor were the promises he made to quit the kingdom performed; on the contrary, as soon as he had disembarked on Essex, instead of quitting the island, he prepared for new aggressions. His friends at Mersey, hearing of his arrival, joined him on the coast.

Alarmed into caution, by the skill of Alfred, he built a strong fortification at Benfleet, and from this sent out powerful detachments to forage and devastate. The acquisition of provisions was as

[42] Sax. Chron. 94. Alfred and his son-in-law, Ethered, stood sponsors. Flor. 331.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

894.

necessary as, from the precautionary measures of Alfred, it was difficult. The country was no longer open to incursions as formerly; a regular communication of defence, and a vigilant armed peasantry, directed by able men, secured the property of the country, and straitened the supplies of the invader. Hastings had to conquer, before he could subsist.

From his strong hold at Benfleet, Hastings marched with a portion of his united army to spread his depredations through Mercia. This excursion was fortunate for Alfred. The troops which he had allotted to act against the enemy in Mersey proceeded through London, and were joined by the warlike citizens. While Hastings was abroad, the Anglo-Saxons attacked those who remained in the intrenchment, forced their defence, threw them into complete confusion, and again carried away their wealth, women, and children, to London. Of the ships which lay under the protection of the fort, they broke up some, burnt others, and sailed with the rest to London and Rochester.[43]

The wife and children of Hastings were again sent to Alfred. The king was strongly urged to put them to death, as an act of vengeance for the perfidy and cruelty of Hastings; but Alfred's nobler mind consulted only its generosity, and with that benevolent magnanimity so rare, not only in barbarous ages, but in civilised war, and yet which sheds new glory round the illustrious character who displays it, he loaded them with presents, and again sent them free to his rival.[44]

During these transactions Alfred had reached

[43] Sax. Chron. 94.
[44] Sax. Chron. 94. Matt. West. 347. Flor. 331.

Digitized by Google

Exeter with so much expedition, that the invaders, disconcerted by his unexpected presence, raised the siege of the town with precipitation, hastened to their ships, and committed themselves once more to the chance of the ocean. On their return round the southern shore, they attacked Chichester, on the coast of Sussex; but the brave citizens repulsed them to the sea, slaying many hundreds, and taking some ships.[45] CHAP. XI. 894.

Before Alfred could return from Devonshire, Hastings had collected again his defeated army, and, keeping still on the sea-coast, where he might receive the supplies he needed, he erected a strong fortress at South Shobery, near the south-eastern point of Essex: there he was joined by numbers from Northumbria and East Anglia, and by another descendant from Ragnar Lodbrog.[46] Confident from his numbers, and dissatisfied with his frustrated plan of defensive settlement, he appears to have adopted a new scheme of operations, in which rapid enterprise was the predominant feature.

Hastings sailed up the Thames into the heart of the king's dominions, and spread his forces over Mercia.[47] By this intrepid measure, he had often scattered terror through France, and enriched himself with booty.

[45] Sax. Chron. 94. 96. Flor. 331.

[46] Ethelwerd mentions that Sigefert came to him with a powerful fleet from Northumbria, p. 847. The Annals of Ulster, p. 65., mention Sigfred, the son of Ingwar, as roaming about the British isles at at this period. Ethelwerd notices the death of Guthfred, king of Northumbria at this time, and his burial at York, p. 847. As Sigfred is stated, in the Ulster Annals, to have killed his brother Godfred about this period, p. 65., they are probably the Sigefert and Guthfred of Ethelwerd.

[47] Ethelwerd says he extended his ravages to Stamford, between the Weolod and the thick wood called Ceoftefne, p. 847.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

894.

He proceeded through Mercia to the Severn. But his presence roused to their duty the military commanders of every district which he traversed. Ethered, the governor of Mercia, two other aldermen, and the king's thanes, who were residing in the strong holds which he had erected, summoned the people of every borough from the east of Pedridan, the west of Selwood, and the east and north of the Thames, to the west of the Severn, with some portion of the North Welsh. The willing citizens united to protect their families and their property. Alfred advanced to join them, pursued the bold invaders to Buttington, on the Severn, and besieged them in their fortress, both by land and on the river.

Surrounded by the hostility of the country, and without shipping, they were obliged to submit to the blockade. They were lodged on both banks of the Severn, and they remained confined to their post for several weeks, enduring every extremity of distress. They killed a great part of their horses for their subsistence, and yet many perished by famine.[48]

The success with which the generals of Alfred, and their hasty levies, compelled such a spirit as that of Hastings to submit to a calamitous confinement, announces highly the energy and wisdom of the regulations by which Alfred had provided for the defence of his people.

Roused by their sufferings, the Northmen attempted to burst from their prison. They threw themselves upon the Anglo-Saxons, who occupied the eastern part of the blockade, and an ardent con-

[48] Sax. Chron. 95. M. West. 348.

Digitized by Google

flict ensued, in which several royal thanes perished; the Northmen were repulsed, many drowned, and some thousands were slain; but the rest effected their escape. These went directly forwards to Essex, and reached their intrenchments, and the ships they had abandoned, without further molestation.[49]

ALTHOUGH their bold enterprise, which had carried devastation into the centre of England, had ended in disaster, yet their spirit of adventure was not quelled. They were educated to exist with the most excited and most pleasurable vitality in the tempests of war, and no failure deterred them, because, having no homes but their ships, or a conquered country, no profession but piracy, no provisions but their spoils, they had no chances of enjoyment, or even existence, but from the battle. It was distressing to have an enemy to encounter, who must gain his point or perish; because there is a vivaciousness in his despair, which no danger can intimidate, no defeat, less than total annihilation, can destroy. He must act offensively while he lives. Desperate, and therefore fearless, he delights to multiply contests, because every encounter, presenting a possibility of success, is to him an advantage, and to his opponent a peril.

THE ruined bands of Hastings were in this situation when they regained their station in Essex. He might have manned his vessels, and sought the smiles of fortune on more prosperous shores; but wherever he went he must extort subsistence from plunder, and win his fortune with his sword. England had charms which overbalanced the discou-

[49] Sax. Chron. 95. Florence, 332.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

ragement of his discomfiture; and he resolved to wrestle with Alfred for the sceptre again.[50]

894. BEFORE the winter came on, Hastings had raised a large army from the East Anglians and Northumbrians. Their wives, their shipping, and their wealth, they confided to the East Anglians, and marching with that vigorous rapidity from which Hastings and the Northmen had so often derived their surest advantages, they rested neither night nor day till they had reached and fortified Chester in the Wirall.[51] Alfred was active to pursue, but he did not overtake them till they had surrounded themselves with fortifications, which the military knowledge of that day respected as impregnable. Alfred, for two days, besieged them, drove away all the cattle in the vicinity, slew every enemy who ventured beyond the encampment, and burnt and consumed all the corn of the district.[52]

895. FROM Chester, Hastings led his bands for subsistence into North Wales: he plundered and then quitted it, with his booty; but not daring to molest West Saxony, or Mercia, where the troops of Alfred were watching his progress, he made a cir-

[50] Hastings is thus far distinctly mentioned. M. Westm. states him to have led the Northmen from Benfleet to the Severn, p. 347, 348., and carries on the history of the same army to Cwatbridge, 349. Hence there can be no doubt that he was still the chief leader.

[51] Spelman, who, in his Life of Alfred, is generally accurate, construed Lega-ceaster to mean Leicester, but this town is spelt with an r before ceaster, as Legerceaster, Legraceaster. Sax. Chron. 25. and 106. The Wirall is thus described by Camden: "From the city (Chester) there runneth out a Chersonese into the sea, inclosed on one side with the æstuary Dee, and on the other with the river Mersey; we call it Wirall; the Welsh, because it is a corner, Killgury. This was all heretofore a desolate forest, and not inhabited (as the natives say); but king Edward disforested it. Now it is well furnished with towns." Brit. Chesh.

[52] Sax. Chron. 95.

Digitized by Google

cuit through Northumbria, and East Anglia, and proceeded till he reached Mersey, in Essex. He seems to have always made this a favourite point of retreat or rallying. It was favourable for the junction of other adventurers, and it seems to have been his wish to have founded a little kingdom here. Before the winter, he drew his ships from the Thames up the Lea.[53] CHAP. XI. 895.

To protect their fleet, they built a fortress on the Lea, twenty miles above London. This distance suits either Ware or Hertford.[54] To have maintained this position would have been to have secured the establishment they wished in Essex. In the summer, a great number of the citizens of London, and many from its neighbourhood, attacked the Danish strong hold; but the Northmen repulsed them with the loss of four king's thanes. This disaster required the presence and ability of Alfred to repair. In autumn he encamped near the discomfited city, at the time when the harvest ripened, that the invaders might not deprive the Londoners of their subsistence. One day, the king musing on some decisive blow against his pertinacious enemy, rode to the river, and conceived the practicability of a plan of so affecting the stream, that the ships might be prevented from coming out. He executed his skilful project. By digging three new channels below, he drew off so much water as to leave the ships aground[55]; and

[53] Flor. Wig. 333. The Lea (Ligan) is the little river which divides Essex from Middlesex, as the Stour separates it from Suffolk, and the Stort from Hertfordshire.

[54] Camden mentions Ware; Spelman, Hertford.

[55] I insert this account on the authority of Huntingdon, because his statement is adopted by Camden and Spelman. The Saxon Chronicle and Florence imply that Alfred made the Danish ships

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

to protect his new works, he built a castle on each side of the river, and encamped in the vicinity.

896. FINDING that they could not get out their ships, the Northmen abandoned them, and, desirous to escape from the nets of destruction with which the active mind of Alfred was encompassing them, they had again recourse to that celerity of movement which had so often rescued them from impending ruin. Sending their wives to their countrymen in East Anglia[56], they suddenly broke up from their intrenchments at night, and, outflying Alfred, they again traversed Mercia, from the Lea to the Severn, and settling themselves at Bridgnorth[57], they defended their encampments, as usual, by an immediate fortification.

THE idea of always protecting their positions by military defences, and the facility with which they raised such as Alfred dared not assault, augur favourably of the warlike knowledge of the invaders, or of their veteran chieftain.

THE army of Alfred followed Hastings to the Severn, but respected his intrenchments so highly as to permit him to pass the winter unmolested. In the meantime, the citizens of London seized the ships on the Lea; such as they could bring away were carried to London, with their contents; the others were destroyed.

useless by obstructions, by building two works (ge-weorc S. C. obstructurum F.) below the part where the vessels lay.

[56] Flor Wig. 334. Sax. Chron. 97.

[57] The Saxon Ch. says, Cpaebpicze bæ beyepn. The ancient name of Bridgnorth in the Saxon Annals is Bpicze, and in ancient records it is called Bridge. Two towns near it are called Quatford and Quat, which is a fact implying that Cwatbridge should not be far off. Gibson's add. to Camden, 552. Spelman placed it in this part, p. 88. Camden and Somner sought for it at Cambridge, and in Gloucestershire, which is less probable. M. West. spells it Quantebrige, p. 349.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

For three years had Hastings, undismayed, contended against Alfred[58]; and, notwithstanding the power, skill, and victories of the West Saxon king, had always recruited his losses, and maintained his invasion; but his spirit now began to bend under the genius of his master. All that energy, and valour, and labour, could effect, he had used in vain. He had, as the Saxon Chronicle intimates, made great devastations, and weakened the English nation, by the destruction of much of its population, but he had not "broken it up." Hastings therefore at last yielded indignantly to his evil fortune. The Northmen now disbanded; some withdrew to East Anglia, some to Northumbria. They who had no resources to expect from these regions, made ships; and, stimulated by want, crossed the ocean, and attempted plunder on the Seine.[59] 897.

One feeble attempt terminated this invasion, which must have been prodigal of human life. The

[58] The Saxon Chronicle says, "This was about the third year since they came hither, over the sea to Limene-mouth," p. 97.; thus expressing that the invaders at Cwatbridge were the same who had come from Boulogne.

[59] Sax. Chron. 97. Flor. Wig. 334. Hastings is not mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle by name as having accompanied these, because the Chronicles rarely mention the king or chiefs of the Northmen. Hence it was with some trouble that I have been enabled to trace a connected history of his warfare against Alfred. But the fact in our chroniclers of part of the army he had acted with going afterwards to the Seine, suits the intimation in the French Chronicles, that he obtained at last a settlement there. See further, note 63. Since the above remarks were written, I perceive a passage in the Annals of Asser, which justifies our ascribing the incidents of this long-contested invasion to Hastings, and which distinctly states him to have begun it, and to have retired with the army to the Seine, 895. Hastængus cum exercitibus sibi adhærentibus, tertio anno postquam venerunt in ostium Tamensis, et in ostium fluminis, *mare transivit*, sine lucro et sine honore, sed multis perditis ex sociis suis applicuit in ostium Sequanæ fluminis, p. 172.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

897. depredators, who had retired beyond the Humber and the Ouse, embarked in long, well-constructed ships, to revenge themselves by piracy on the coast of Wessex. But even through the ocean the genius of Alfred pursued them. He was skilled in domestic architecture; and he applied his talents to the improvement of his ships; he caused vessels to be built against the Northmen, full-nigh twice as long as theirs, swifter, higher, and less unsteady. In some he put sixty rowers, in others more. They were neither like Frisian nor Danish ships, which then excelled all others in Europe. They were made on that plan which the judgment of Alfred, enlightened by his knowledge and experience, discerned to be more useful than either.[60] Six Danish vessels ravaged the Isle of Wight and Devonshire, and the intervening coast. The king ordered nine ships of his new naval architecture, manned with Frisians and English, to pursue them; with the orders to take all alive they could.[61] The king's fleet found the Northmen's six near the shore; three of these were aground, the other three went out and endured the combat: two were taken: the third escaped with only five men. The conquering English sailed to the bay, where the others were detained; but the inconstant waters betrayed them into peril. The unexpected retreat of the waves separated the English fleet into two portions; one,

[60] This important passage deserves to be transcribed, in its original language: "Tha hec Ælfred cyning timbrian lange scipu ongen tha æscas. Tha pæron sul neah tpa spa lange spa tha othru. Sume hæfdon 60 ara, sume ma. Tha pæron æzchep ze spiftpan, ze unpealcpan, ze eac hypan thonne tha othru. Næron hie naptheр ne on Fpiesisc zescæpene ne on Dænisc butе spa him selfum thuhte, thæt hie nytpynthorte beon meahton." Sax. Chron. 98.

[61] Fl. Wig. 335.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

consisting of three ships, remained fixed close by the enemy, the rest were kept asunder on another part, and could not move to the support of their friends. The wary Danes embraced the opportunity, and attacked the three ships which the waters had placed near them. Lucumon, the king's gerefa, perished, with Æthelferth, his geneat or herdsman, three Frisian chiefs, and sixty-two of the crew. Of the Danes, 120 fell. The battle seems to have been indecisive; but the tide first releasing the Danish ships, they sailed into the ocean. They were, however, so injured, that two were afterwards cast on the English shore, and their crews were ordered by Alfred to execution. The same year, twenty more of their ships were taken, and the men were punished as pirates.[62] 897.

Thus terminated the formidable attempt of Hastings. As far as we can distinguish the last incidents of his life, he returned to France, and obtained from the king the gift of some territory, where he passed the remainder of his life in peaceful privacy.[63] His memory was honoured by the encomium of a warrior, in a future age, whose invasion of England was successful, but who had not to encounter the abilities of an Alfred.[64] The defence of England against Hastings was a greater

[62] Sax. Chron. 99. Flor. Wig. 335.

[63] Hastingus vero Karolum Francorum regem adiens, pacem petiit, quam adipiscens, urbem Carnotensem stipendii munere ab ipso accepit. Wil. Gem. 221. He is mentioned for the last time on Rollo's invasion and acquisition of Normandy, as residing at this place. Ibid. p. 228.; and Dudo, p. 76.

[64] William the Conqueror, in his address to his troops, as stated by Bromton, says, "Quid potuit rex Francorum bellis proficere cum omni gente quæ est a Lotaringia usque ad Hispaniam contra Hasting antecessorem vestrum, qui sibi quantum de Francia voluit acquisivit, quantum voluit regi permisit, dum placuit tenuit, dum sauciatus est ad majora anelans reliquit?" p. 959.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

897.

evidence of Alfred's military talents than his triumph over the armies which had harassed the first part of his reign.

NOTWITHSTANDING the vigilance and ability of Alfred, it was impossible that such a dangerous contest could have existed without great detriment to his people.[65] The ravages and depopulation caused by Hastings and his associates, in their persisting invasion and extensive movements, are spoken of very strongly by the Chroniclers. But the miseries of this warfare were exceeded by the dreadful calamity which attended its conclusion. A pestilence which raged for three years filled the nation with death; even the highest ranks were thinned by its destruction.[66]

THE sovereignty of Alfred was not only established over the Anglo-Saxons[67], but even the Cymry in Wales acknowledged his power, and sought his alliance. The rest of his life was tranquil. He continued to prosecute all his plans for the improvement of his shipping and the defence and education of his kingdom. His reputation increased with his life. All sought his friendship, and none in vain. He gave land and money to those who desired them, and his personal friendship to those who aspired to it. All experienced that

[65] The exclamation of the monk of Worcester is forcible: "O quam crebris vexationibus, quam gravibus laboribus, quam diris et lamentalibus modis, non solum a Danis, qui partes Angliæ tunc temporis occupaverant, verum etiam ab his Satanæ filiis tota vexata est Anglia," p. 334. Matt. West. has copied it, p. 348.

[66] Some of the noblemen who perished are named in Sax. Chron. p. 97.; and Flor. Wig. 335.

[67] In 836 Alfred besieged London (Ethelw. 846.), rebuilt it with honour, made it habitable, and subjected it to Ethelred's dominion. It is added, that all the Anglo-Saxons, not under the dominion of the Danes, submitted to Alfred. Flor. Wig. 322. Sax. Chron. 88.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XI.

love, vigilance and protection, with which the king defended himself, and those attached to him.[68] But at last the progress of human destiny deprived the world of its then most beneficent luminary. After a life of the most active utility, he was taken from the world, on the 26th day of October, in the year 900 or 901.[69] His great character has been praised by many[70], but, by none more than it has merited. Its best panegyric will be an impartial consideration of it, under three divisions, of his intellectual, moral, and political exertions.

897.

[68] Asser, 50.

[69] The year of his death is variously given. Matt. West. 350. Ing. 28.; and Rad. Dic. 452.; place it in 900. The Sax. Chron. 99.; Malms. 46.; Mailros, 146.; Florence, 336. Petrib. Ch. 2. affix it to the year 901. So Hen. Silgrave, MSS. Cleop. A. 12. and others. He was buried at Winchester, in the abbey he had founded there; but his remains were removed by Henry I. to the new abbey in the meadows at Hyde, on the northern quarter of the city, and laid under the high altar. This building was destroyed at the Reformation, and what is left of Alfred's body now lies 'covered by modern buildings or buried in the ruins of the old.' Rev. C. Townshend's Winchester, p. 17.

[70] Alfred has been highly extolled by foreigners. The following extracts show the opinions of a Frenchman and German on his character: — Je ne sçais s'il y a jamais eu sur la terre un homme plus digne des respects de la posterité qu'Alfred le grand, qui rendit ces services à sa patrie, supposé que tout ce qu'on raconte de lui soit veritable. — Voltaire, Essai sur les Mœurs, vol. xvi. c. 26. p. 473. ed. 1785. —— "But as the greatest minds display themselves in the most turbulent storms on the call of necessity, so England has to boast, among others, her Alfred; a pattern for kings in a time of extremity, a bright star in the history of mankind. Living a century after Charlemagne, he was, perhaps, a greater man in a circle happily more limited." Herder's Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man, p. 547, 548. The celebrated Mirabeau, in a Discours Préliminaire, published under his name, to a translation of Mrs. Macauley's History, draws with a liberality that does him credit, a parallel between Alfred and Charlemagne, and gives the superiority to the Anglo-Saxon.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

Digitized by Google

The following Works, by the same Author, together with the HISTORY of the ANGLO-SAXONS, contain the HISTORY of ENGLAND from the Earliest Period to the Accession of James I.

MIDDLE AGES;

THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES,

Comprising the Reigns from William the Conqueror to the death of Henry VII.,

AND THE

HISTORY OF THE LITERATURE, POETRY, RELIGION, AND LANGUAGE OF ENGLAND,

During that Period.

Third Edition, 5 vols. 8vo. Price 3*l.*

MODERN HISTORY;

THE

MODERN HISTORY OF ENGLAND

From the End of the Middle Ages to the Death of Queen Elizabeth.

Third Edition.

Vols. 1 and 2., the Reign of Henry VIII., Price 1*l.* 6*s.*

Vols. 3 and 4., the Reigns of Edward VI., Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, with the History of the Reformation, From the Century before Luther, to its Establishment in Great Britain, Price 1*l.* 12*s.*

H 3

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

STACK STUDY
CHARGE
CANCELLED

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google